

THE ORAL HISTORY



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Daniel Sinker & Josh Hooten front cover

Daniel Sinker back cover

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All ads are due

October 15th
for PP22 Jan/Feb 1998

Ads not reserved will get in, but you have no say as to what issue. Any ads received after deadline may run in the following issue. Those are the risks ... Are you the gambling type?

the risks

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TRACK ONE/INTRO

This is the last issue of *Punk Planet* to be produced in the 8' x 12' bedroom I've called home for the past 3 years. To say that I've outgrown the space would be the understatement of the year.

Discarded printouts cover every available space on the floor. Envelopes filled with writing samples tower precariously next to my bed. Records are strewn everywhere, warping slowly from the heat. My cat sleeps on the pile of clean laundry that takes up an entire comer of my room because my desk chair blocks access to my dresser. My bed is available only when I clear it off to sleep at night. Boxes of backissues of the 'zine spill out into the living room, much to my roommate's chagrin.

In two weeks, *Punk Planet* will be taking up new digs in its own room in my new apartment located in a decidedly un-hip part of town. Cheap rent, lots of space, no hipsters—who could ask for more? In two weeks, for the first time in 3 years, I will be able to sleep in a room completely separate from *Punk Planet*. This is significant.

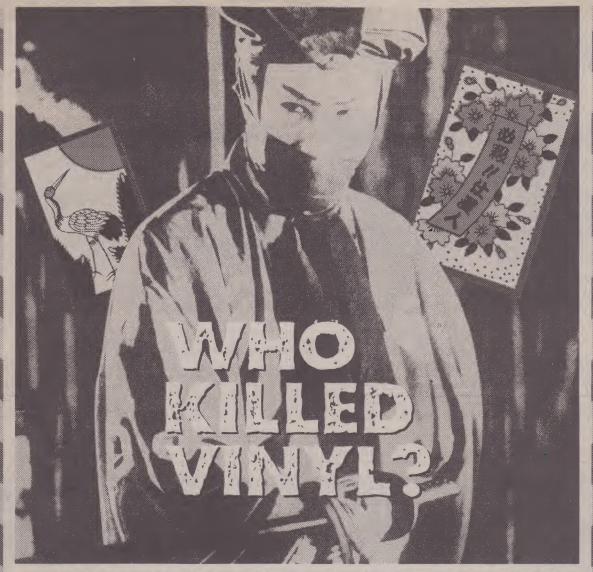
Hanging in the new office will be a photograph. I took it this afternoon. It's of my current bedroom/office in all of it's cluttered glory. Under the photo will be the caption "Never Forget."

You can't take history for granted. Whether it's realizing that the land you live in came from the blood of someone who didn't or something as frivolous as learning that the band you love so much isn't treading any new ground, history keeps you grounded.

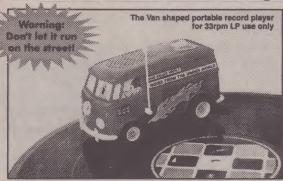
With that in mind, we here at *Punk Planet* present to you an oral history of Black Flag, one of the most important bands in creating the sound and fury that is still, 12 years after they broke up, the backbone of punk rock. It's an important history, and not just because it gives intimate details about a band that has become a punk rock myth but because it—like the photo I'll hang on the wall of the new office—let's you appreciate where you are now even more.

All of us here in the cramped bedrooms, living rooms & offices all over the country that make up the collective space of *Punk Planet* hope you enjoy this issue. If you don't, we urge you to make your own zine. In fact, you should be making your own zine anyway!

See you in the winter,



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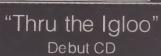
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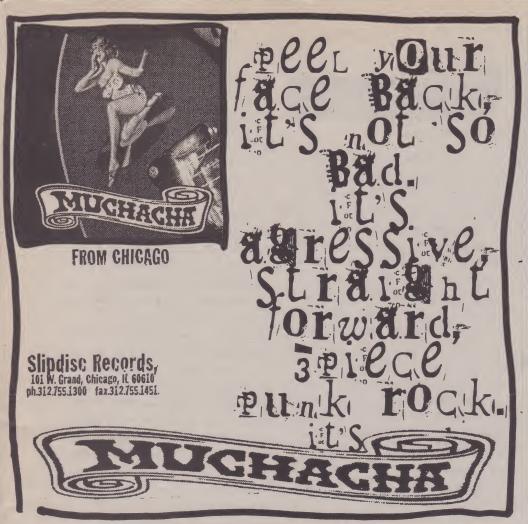
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"I have no penis. I have NO penis!"-Matt Miller, Punk Planet #18

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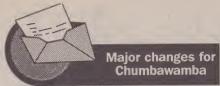
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Dear Punk Planet Readers,

I thought I'd write and tell you which labels we've decided to release *Thubthumper* (the album) on. In the UK, Europe and Asia it will be on EMI Electrola and in the States it'll be released on Republic Records.

We thought long and hard before we finally decided what to do, and I'll explain the reasoning behind our choices. Our experiences over the last fifteen years have robbed us of the naive view that there's 'good' and 'bad' capitalism. We learned the hard way that 'indie' isn't shorthand for integrity—it's become a style guideline rather than (how we originally perceived it) a shortening of the word "independent". (Duh).

As a band we've tried releasing records in various ways: we started our own record label, Agit-Prop, but found that we had to choose between being a boss/label and a band. We were OK at the creative end of running a label but we were crap at the business side and lost a lot of money helping bands put out records which didn't sell very well. During that time we used an independent distributor; mad as it seems now we told them that as anarchists we wanted to work on trust rather than from contracts. It took us a while to learn that 'trust' is another word for 'sucker' in the music industry—basically, we got ripped off more by our own naivete than by the industry.

We signed to One Little Indian—our last label—thinking that we'd found a label that we had things in common with. We'd known Derek Birkett (OLI's boss) since his days in the band, Flux of Pink Indians, and we assumed that the label had other objectives as well as profit. We knew the label would only keep us as long as we sold enough records, but that seemed like a fair deal.

In the end, though, the label became preoccupied with it's financial problems; and as we were one of the few bands who didn't lose them tons of money in videos and ultra-expensive promotional failures, OLI were keen for us to stay safe, don't try anything new, and release an annual imitation of "Anarchy" to keep the float topped up. (Which we weren't prepared to do). The final straw was a sudden interest in taking away Chumbawamba's artistic control.

("Go away and write some stronger songs...")

We told OLI that we wanted to leave in December 1996. When we started looking round for another company we realized that we no longer made a distinction between 'major' and 'indie'. We knew labels would see us only in terms of whether we were profitable so we stopped pretending that we had to have some vague political trust in whoever released our records; plus we were fed up with constantly bypassing the "popular" part of popular culture, not being able to play in places like the USA, and watching as a million other crap bands were getting the airtime/press space to talk absolute crap whilst we sniped from the sidelines. We wanted to work with the labels who'd work the hardest in our interest.

We went to Germany to sign with EMI at the end of last week, and one of the EMI blokes asked us if it was problematic for us to be signed with EMI. I said it was, because EMI has symbolic status. Chumbawamba's early history is rooted in (so-called) "peace punk", and EMI was always shorthand for everything evil about the music industry. Signing with EMI for us finally lays the ghost of peace punk, its political mistakes and its misplaced logic, to rest. It isn't the eighties any more... you can't fight a modernized army using outdated weaponry.

We haven't actually signed with Republic (in the US) yet but we will be in the next couple of weeks. Our attitude is that we want to make records that people actually get to hear, (and don't have to buy in specialist record shops at import prices...) and it looks like we have more chance of doing that with EML and Republic.

We realize that some people are going to be unhappy about our choices, but it's not our job to placate people with false distinctions between 'good' and 'bad' bosses. Our job is to spread propaganda, throw up debate and argument, cause some trouble, and carry on making music which goes against the grain of these shallow times. We reckon all these things deserve to reach a bigger audience.

Those of you who don't give a shit who we sign with must think I've rambled on too long, but we felt we owed an explanation to those of you who do,

alice on behalf of chumbawamba

P.S. EMI has long-since ditched its connection to arms trading, by the way.



PP / Bob Conrad:

First column I'd read from you in a while, and I liked it. Well, sorta. I hate the way you portray activism as futile, but I agree with some of your basic ideas.

As one of the founders of Reno Critical Mass, I felt the need to write in our defense. You call action like Critical Mass "ineffectual," and in the immediate sense, you're right. We've had five or six successful rides, and Reno's streets haven't gotten any more bikefriendly. In fact, they may be getting more dangerous — we're making motorists plenty pissed off at cyclists on the first Friday of each month. And even if people are made to understand why we're "blocking traffic," most continue to drive everywhere they go.

The reason is, like you say, in most cases it's the most convenient way to get around town, and most people will do what is most convenient for them. European cities like Amsterdam and Copenhagen are perfect examples of cities planned for people. In Amsterdam, bikes, pedestrians, public transportation, and cars are treated with equal priority. All have their own lane and traffic light, everywhere. Bike lanes don't just end like they do in U.S. cities. So, when asked about their choice of transport, most Amsterdammers said they ride bikes because it's the most convenient way to get around. It's faster and easier (and cheaper) than driving a car because there's no place to park, and too much traffic (from tourists, taxicabs, and city vehicles). And since bikes have their own lane, it's safe!

Reno is a city planned for *cars*, not people. The planners in most U.S. cities don't give much thought to bikes and pedestrians. I was made well aware of this when I was trying to help open a club here — we were all ready to rent a building and make it happen, but the zoning / planning department kept giving us the thumbs down because of *parking*. They were telling us we needed one parking space for every three people. (So for a 300 capacity club, we'd need a huge parking lot with 100 spaces!!) Of course, when I asked them if we'd be required to have a bike rack, they said, "no." It's no wonder that the majority of the

urban environment is fucking pavement, and that things are so spread out, "forcing" people to own cars and drive. What makes you think that Critical Massers don't know this?

I personally don't expect immediate results from Critical Mass. I'm well aware that Joe Hick isn't gonna give up his penis extension 4x4 because a bunch of "pussies" on bikes tell him he should. We need to get down to the root of the problem, and make our city move the way of Amsterdam. No one person can do this alone, and this is one thing Reno Critical Mass does accomplish: it creates solidarity among cyclists. And suddenly the City of Reno has a loud, obnoxious voice to hear every time they make a transportation decision.

Actions like Critical Mass plant a seed in people. Not the people on the outside, but the participants. Surely CM riders will make an effort to avoid the hypocrisy of driving, and probably will spread the message to some friends. People who are involved may go on to take more serious action, like joining the local Bike Council (something I'm considering, although it's doubtful because the people on the council now are a *real* bunch of pussies!). And Food Not Bombs sets an example of how to make good use of what would otherwise be waste, and could likely inspire participants to take further action.

Pete / Sticker Guy Po Box 204 . Reno NV 89504 USA stickerguy@powernet.net



Hi

In your Jan/Feb issue of *Punk Planet* there was an ad called Whip Me distributions. I ordered a Belt and I have been ripped off. The stupid fucker never sent me my \$30 belt. His name is Darin Hitchman (maybe). If you have any information or have had any other complaints please let me know.

Thank you, Earl Harrington

Earl,

You're not alone in being ripped off by Whip Me. I've gotten a number of other calls by people that sent 'em money and never got shit back. Unfortunately, the only address I have for Whip Me is the same one you do: the one in the ad. Plus, Whip Me didn't include a phone number with their payment, so I've got no way to contact them to figure out what went wrong. Hopefully they'll read your letter and the conscience will get the best of them. But something tells me they won't.

Rest assured that if Whip Me sends an ad to Punk Planet sometime in the future, they're gonna have to have to have a pretty good explanation for all this before it runs.

Sorry,

Dan



Punk Planet,

In response to the attack on my band [letters, PP19], the Padded Cell from Grand Master Tom Trouble and his band Dick Army (the one in Arlington, VA).

Though I may not be able to write as poetically as he, I must take the time to say to him, how can I say this with style?..... Fuck You, you silly cunt. I guess this whole thing is my fault. I first contacted this chump, because I saw an advertisement in a mag, larger than anything that we could afford showing Padded Cell Records. I thought it was another asshole with a lot of money starting up his label to be the next big punk machine. So we decided to fuck with the guy. We figured that he was a wannabe business man then we should talk all business to him. You never know, he might change the name, and if not, who cares. The truth is, we don't even have a trademark that would stop a label from using our band name. And I wouldn't have the resources nor the money to be able to sue someone for something as petty as this. I figured that if it were really a band and not someone trying to be the next big record label, they would just laugh at our letter and throw it away. I can't believe these sensitive wimps even took the letter so seriously. What a joke! Now, these hungry fuck holes are now doing anything they can, to belittle us for their own political gain. Oh, the nifty world of whiny music politics. They have made us their mighty cause that they must fight in order to police the punk rock scene. They have sent

many insulting letters our way and now they are tattling on us to a magazine. Oooo, did we break another punk rock rule? Did we not follow the proper punk rock guidelines?

They now call us a "sell out" in print. Wow, that should rally a lot of support for their mighty cause. That's it, take the easy attack, knowing that the scene is always ready to eat on itself. All you have to say is, sue, sellout conformist and you can get any punk to turn on a band. I can't believe Tom from Dick Army would actually take a corny name like Johny Rebel seriously enough to use it against me. Do you always go for the obvious and easy target, Mr. Anal Lube? It's wonderful to be a sell out, when I'm pushing a shopping cart full of my dirty clothes to the fucking laundromat. Couldn't someone wait until I could afford a fucking car before I'm named a sell out? Does anyone have any extra pity they could throw my way? If they are really that jealous, I can get a Dick Army tattoo also. Would that make you feel better, Tom? Well, I'm sorry,but I'm not the big corporate machine you need to fight. I don't even have any idea how to be a business man, like he claims. If so, I'm not a very good businessman, am I? Bla-bla-bla. Instead, we plan to deal with this fun, kiddy game, far away from any court system. And if you are idiotic enough to believe anything from this piece of shit, or any of the employees at Padded Cell Records, then fuck you too.

To let the truth be known, we have always thought Padded Cell was one silly name for a band, and though we may fart around and blow a lot of smoke about it, I doubt that anyone in my band would actually go to war over such a cornball name. After their third letter to us, I have to admit that I was extremely impressed with Tom's literary abilities. Tom Trouble is extremely well read and articulate. And it is obvious that I took checkers to a chess game. When we first contracted these guys, we were merely trying to play the "when in Rome" game. So what! They called our feeble bluff, so what. We wrote them back telling them that it was a bluff, so what. Tom is one of those guys that has a great talent with words, yet can't seem to find a battle field worthy of his talent. Maybe that is why he took us so seriously and why he feels that he should be the great messenger about such an already tired issue. But since he is so intelligent, I can't help but to also believe that he is writing a magazine

about this as a way of putting us down to build himself up. Well, I guess everyone has to have their stepping stone. Both Dick Army and The Padded Cell have been rather fucking stupid about this whole stupid thing. And the Padded Cell plan to get even stupider.

Let me sum up, we have been using the name Padded Cell for eight years as the name of our band and though we have shared the name several times with others that later came up with the same name, bands, studios, etc... This time, for some stupid reason, we did not want to share a band name with a record company, then we put our foot in our mouth and now Dick Envy Army is using it as a ploy to gain exposure. Now, I can say I'm a true Punker Dude because I'm a part of the writing in to publications to belittle another band. This name calling and mud slinging, sure is a whole heap of fun. And to think, my maturity level can sink even lower than this. Next response from us will be filled with plenty of "Ma Ma" jokes. Fuck Tom Trouble the intellectual whiny crybaby, fuck Dick Army, fuck their ideas on punk smunk rock, fuck their anarchy crap, fuck their tattling to the scene, fuck their stupid record label name, and fuck anyone that even cares about their politically correctiveness. We are a bunch of punks, but we have no claims of being punk rock and the anarchy sign in our name is only a symbol to rub people the wrong way. Glad to know it rubbed you the wrong way. In direct response to Tom's letter... Blow it out your ass.

Honestly, Tom, I'd rather be your chum than your enemy. But just incase you're too idealistic to get past all this, neener, neener, neener, you can suck my weiner.

Love always, Johny Rebel The Padded Cell



Hello PunkPlanet,

I've read the most recent *PP*[#19] and turned to the first column to read Larry's follow up to his cartoon version of the ordeal of Lookout! vs just about everyone. I belive that Larry is a master at avoiding the subject. He has made it a point not to mention any of his actions or to try to validate them. He has only

slandered the others invloved and continued to do so with this column.

Begining the column he addresses letters that he has gotten and slams the little punkers that wrote him saying that that are unable to comprehend what it was that he was saying. I think these are the exact people that did comprehend what he was saying He was snowballing anyone who wasn't reading to try and get his side. Larry obviously used fictional characters and a cartoon world as a way of avoiding concrete points that I was hoping to hear justification to.

After slaming fans of his he writes that he plans to, in plain terms, explain the issues that those same fans had missed in the first column. Larry went on the say how his main accuser (Tim) was a sellout. The point is that even if Tim is a sellout (I don't think any of us are qualified to say who's the sellouts) what he's saying doesn't become invalid.

Larry is a good writer and succeeded in writing two very good and easy to read articles. He did however aviod all accusations against him leaving them unaccounted for. We the readers can only assume what Tim is saying in *MRR* to be true because Larry won't even bring the topics, up in his own column, to justify his actions or even dispell the actual accurance of them.

I like Lookout! and will continue to buy their records. I like Larry and will continue to read his column, but I will recognize the fact he on at least two seperate occasions tried to avoid the topic and used emotional speech to try and veer my opinion instead of addressing the issue. I also like MRR and will continue to read it, although I think tim may have stuck his nose into something just to have something to stick his nose into. I find there is nothing punks like more than to say another punk is not what they say the are. I feel that that's exactly what has happened here. I don't know what happened between Lookout! and Ben and Tim (George Tabb is the only one I feel gave total disclosure of his situation with Lookout!) but I feel that it all could have be taken care of rationaly and quietly without ruining people's lives.

Tom

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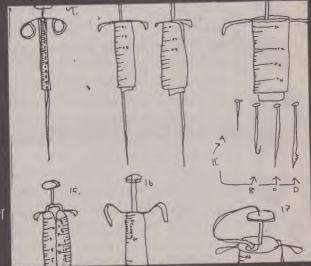
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JOSH HOOTEN COCAINE & BLOWJOBS

years old. A smashed head on a rock fireplace.
5 stitches. It was only a few years ago that my brother admitted to me that he may have pushed me into the fireplace on purpose. Neither of us could remember.

I spent the first through fifth grades in Fayetteville, North Carolina. I lived on Pettigrew Drive in a house that had been built less than a year before we moved into it. There were only four more completed homes on the street before it gave way to cleared lots and construction sites. "The Lakes," as it was called, was a new neighborhood that was quickly filling up with young, middle class white families who were buying, not renting.

In the four years that I lived there, hundreds of houses were built and filled as "The Lakes" swelled miles away from the the two man-made lakes gave the 'hood its name. At the far end was the Elementary school, and on the other side was a run down, not so new neighborhood where all the black families lived. That's where my friends lived. Not because at age nine I was some open minded free thinker accepting of other races and religions, but more because there weren't actual people living in my neighborhood yet, and I needed somebody to play with. We honestly didn't sum each other up based race or economics. It was much more about who had the cool dirt bike and who had the G.I. Joes. We'd sleep over at each others houses, we'd trade lunches, we'd borrow each others toys and never consciously think there was any difference between us.

Every summer my family would load up the Oldsmobuick and drive to Alabama to visit the relatives. My brother and I were assured we would be bored and hot all day everyday. Even worse was that we'd have to endure the never ending stream of racial slurs and jokes about "those monkeys" or "those niggers" to which we had no response other than polite laughter, when on the inside it was tearing us apart. As we got older, we took to just leaving the room, no longer able to fake a laugh or smile, but still not strong enough to stand up on behalf of our friends and our beliefs. I'd always feel guilty when we would return to North Carolina and I'd hang out with my friends again, having silently gone

along with what I'd heard, but not having stood up for myself or my friends.

11 years old. A knee split open on the brick border of the garden at my friends house. 7 stitches. It was the fourth of July and we were rushing around chasing down the distant flashes and bangs of other peoples fireworks in the middle of the night, when I tripped and fell ripping a 4 inch hole in my leg.

It was the worst summer of my entire life. I had just finished my first year of college, which more or less failed to live up to any and all of my expectations of higher education. Since I had no job in Boston and nowhere to stay, I had to return home to live with mom and dad until the fall. The part I was going to have the hardest time with was that I was 6 solid months away from getting to see Kelly again. We were just over two years into what was her and my first real relationship. We had met when we were in high school together in Germany. She was in every single club and organization there was (admittedly because it looked good on applications to Ivy League schools) and I was the weird art kid with the long hair that obsessed over his record collection and got along with everybody but still claimed to hate everybody (to this day, my greatest inconsistency). An atypical couple for high school. Or at least atypical for something as typical as high school.

Her parents still lived in Germany, so she was going to spend the summer there.

I was so in love with her it was pitiful. Everything I've done and felt in relationships since, I did and felt first with her. I had never been more happy or more devastatingly depressed than I had been with her. It was with her that I felt more emotions than just anger and confusion. It was with her that I found out what true anger and confusion was.

She was supposed to fly back to Rhode Island the first week in September. Then we could begin planning when we would be able to see each other again.

It was two weeks shy of her return when, in a fit of depression and desperation, I called her in Germany in the middle of the night. Her mother answered, obviously awakened by my call. "Hi, I'm sorry it's so late, but is Kelly home?" "I thought she was out with you Rick... hello?" "This is Josh." "Oh... Um... Hi Josh... Um... She's out with friends... Um... Should I tell her you called?"

I called her the next day, after walking around my neighborhood until the sun was almost coming up replaying the short conversation with her mother over and over in my head. "I'm going to be in Rhode Island in two days and we'll talk then. You can't afford to call me here." I begged her to tell me the truth. There was no way I could last two days.

Yes she was seeing someone else. No, it wasn't serious. Yes, she was going to tell me. Maybe it would happen again, she didn't know. Yes, she kissed him. No, it didn't go any further than that.

She didn't call me from Rhode Island. She didn't call me until she got back to Cornell. She didn't sound happy to talk to me. She didn't sound like she missed me.

"We need to talk."

"But I love you."

"Don't say that."



"But it's true."

I was the only one crying.

She broke it off after a little over two years and never spoke to me again. Just like that. Severed clean.

I recently heard that she's gotten married.

15 years old. I flew off my bike into a pile of broken glass. 7 stitches in my right forearm. I had to ride 6 miles home all alone holding my arm up in the air trying to minimize the bleeding. The front of my bike had dried blood on it when I was finally able to ride it again—dried blood that I didn't wash off because I thought it was kind of cool looking.

"That's me tattooing Michael Stipe." And it was. Other pictures in Spot's book included a shoulder to shoulder backpiece in old (olde?) English lettering that said "Straight Edge." And then of course page after page of the obligatory skulls and flames and demons and snakes. "You wanna do this or not?" I glance over to my brother, his eyes much more compassionately asking the same question. "Um... yeah."

I'd thought this out hadn't I? This tattoo was open ended enough to remain relevant for the rest of my life wasn't it? It was conceptual enough to make sense in a number of contexts, right? It was metaphorical enough to adopt new meanings over time, right? It wasn't like I was getting "Straight Edge" tattooed on my back or anything. And even if it ceased being directly relevant to my situation someday, didn't Rollins say tattoos worked like a roadmap of your life? Wouldn't this tattoo forever remind me of who I was when I was 20 years old, and wouldn't that always be O.K. even if I ended up being somebody completely different someday? Like Rollins maybe had?

The word that buzzes around tattoos like flies around shit is the word regret. But I'd never met anybody who regretted their tattoos, regardless of how impulsive they may have seemed. I was curious to ask the guy with the eyeball tattooed on his forehead that I was sitting next to while my brother was getting the foot wide barcode done on his back, but I figured I'd better not ask, cuz I thought he would kill me. I didn't think I'd ever regret getting tattooed, but you can't know that for sure. You can second guess yourself forever, but since I was sitting there and Spot was ready to go and I had \$200 dollars burning a hole in my pocket, I looked at my brother, then over to Spot and with all the confidence in the world I said "um... yeah."

21 years old. A series of inch long exacto knife cuts on my arms and stomach. I thought for a while there I was crazy and I would cut myself to try and release the demons. It didn't work, but I felt much better anyway.

She's been diagnosed as something. I don't know exactly what. She was off and on meds. She hated them—hated that she was told she needed them. I've spent a lot of my life cultivating my nuerosis and eccentricities, all the while she's wanted nothing more than to be normal, to feel in control. I'm such a fake.

There were times she wouldn't get out of bed for a week. She wouldn't leave the house for weeks. She didn't eat. She tried to sleep as much as possible. I'd come home and hear the T.V. behind the closed door hoping to hear

movement, or the channel changing so I'd know she was still there. She was still alive.

That's me crying into the phone to a total stranger, her doctor. That's me walking home from work as slowly as possible fighting back tears, afraid of what I might find at home when I arrived. That's me losing sight of who I was. Giving up anything and everything because I knew I was all she had. And she hated me. I cried a lot then, but not nearly as much as she did.

My days were spent stumbling around work or schoo, I sneaking off as often as possible to call home to check on her. Did no answer mean she had gotten up the strength to leave the house? Was she in the shower? Was she just not answering? Had something happened? I skipped work and school as often as possible to stay home and just make sure she didn't need anything.

I'd spend my lunch breaks in the train station looking at the schedules wondering how far away I could get with the money I had. Not far enough. It would take more than a train to get me far enough away from the life I was living. I would sit and ponder the possibility of just getting on a train and leaving everything behind. Go to some town, get some job and try to never look back

I promised I'd leave as soon as I felt it was safe to do so, but I'll still here. I guess I found I needed her as much as she needed me. But in the last two years, we've learned to need each other less and less. This sounds sad in a way, but it's the best thing we could hope for. The best thing we could have done for each other was to care less about each other. We're free standing structures now—for the first time in a long time. Two years later and we're both much much better. Two years later and we've both promised never to go back.

There are scars we choose and scars that choose us. I am a collector of both.

PLAYLIST:

Photek, Euphone, Impetus Inter, Wu-Tang Clan, Lifetime, The Van Pelt, The Trans Megetti, Aphex Twin, Lungfish, Spring Heel Jack, the sound of four hands clapping.



o what if I went to see Stryper when they came to town. I think I was in the 9th grade, officially a freshman but still in middle school due to high-school overcrowding. My buddies and I had Maiden, Metallica and so forth, in our oh-so-metal hearts. To see the yellow-jacket colored quartet of piety preach their stuff to a relatively small

Reno crowd wasn't to be missed. We smoked a cigar while waiting in line. And we were decked out in our patented Levi-jacket stoner garb (though, not one of us ever got high). We were scholarly metallers, not the lanky brand whose only aspiration was noon-time bowls smoked in the baseball field—left field to be precise.

Stryper's drummer could play some serious rockin' beats, and when the audience flashed the double-fingered devil horns, Stryper's lead pretty boy preacher politely asked us to alter it to one. The show went over well in our overly-excited minds. Metal was metal. We didn't care if it was Slayer and Satan, or Stryper and Christ. The Bibles may have literally flown at the concert, but figuratively, we could see through the low-grade attempt to spread the assumed Good Word. Of course, it ended up not so divinely inspired—fucking fools.

When Christians invaded the realm of heavy metal, metal began to take a serious shit. My theory is that once all tangents, sub-genres, flirtations with evil, and elfin pimps of heavy metal savvy (read: Dio) have taken hold of the flame/faith/filth... you name it, Christianity is bound to creep in sooner or later. Throw in a little religion and heavy metal was suddenly about something else entirely. When it ended up that even the godly metallers were grade-A sleaze, nobody gave a shit. Metal had had its day.

By then, I'd mostly moved onto punk. I didn't suspect it then, but even punk would attract the same kind of mentality heavy metal enthusiasts perfected to a disheartening degree: basically, the strive to naive and blind-minded thinking by those who see with such limited vision that, suddenly, it's an us-against-them mentality that pervades every little scene. I went circles with some of the die-hard metallers of my day, who insisted that metal was ONLY about what it appeared to be about (and, in fact, mostly was): a posturing, macho, womanizing, party lifestyle. Excuse me for trying to add a little class where it didn't belong, though I wouldn't admit it at first. Even more the fool, I now find myself exiting those same low-grade debate circles again, this time with the musical genre my heart most attracted itself to.

Why? I find it alarming that this whole Christian punk thing has been taking a serious upswing. Not because it's a blending of mainstream religion with something that presupposes free-thinking, but because it's at a noticeable level—either by its appeal to low-grade mentalities or by its surge of popularity in recent years—that encourages destructiveness, lack of freedom, and abandonment of all hope and self-reliance. This happens, most ironically, in circles that proclaim to think otherwise. It's not just with Christians fitting into punk: anarchists, straightedgers, drunk punks, and so many others are also guilty of behaving morally superior. Christianity is just another addition to the stew of beliefs on how to live.

"If punk is free-thinking, we're free to believe in Christianity," is the assumption as I understand it. I most notice this skewed logic when some of you guys pull the most harebrained assumptions out of things I've written. Recent offenders have surprised me with some of the wildest comments to date. One kid responded to a mad lib I participated in from Chicken Is Good Food zine. The mad lib asked who I'd want to punch in the face if I could. Naturally, a silly question demands a silly response (not that there aren't a few people who I'd get a certain amount of glee by punching upside the head, but that's not something I exactly dwell on or foresee), so my answer was the Pope.

Months after the issue came out, I received a vaguely cryptic message. This kid claims to be a fan of my writing but then expresses dismay at my Pope comment. Go figure. Anyone who's ever read my writing, and taken it even moderately seriously, would be pretty oblivious not to notice I have a bad habit of stretching my sarcasm.

I still can't figure why this guy was offended by my comment. Maybe he's religious or something. I naively assume most people are mature enough to handle tough opinions, or sarcasm, without whimpering like I just strangled their mothers. After losing more than a handful of friends from expressing my thoughts, I now know most people frequently aren't comfortable seeing things other than what's already been shaped in their minds.

For the record, sure, I think the world would be a much better place without mainstream religions and the buffoonery associated with them. That's pretty fucking obvious in fact. Even back when metal was used as artillery for the Christian army, preachers tried to dip their theology into punk too. I refer here to the nutbags (bags o' nuts?) featured in the Youth Brigade/Social Distortion tour documentary, *Another State of Mind*. These weird preachers somehow found a message in punk that coincided with their Christian leanings. They recruited street punks for their gospel hour. It was something creepy like that. Luckily the video had a counter comment which seemed to put an-end to that association pretty quickly.

That's all different now.

Another State of Mind was well before bands like Fifteen and labels like Tooth and Nail, who for all I'm concerned are like-minded creeps hiding behind confused rhetoric and warped associations—which, if you hang around some of the more rabid Christians for any amount of time, seems to be par for the course. Some of the world's toughest atheists are probably more in line with Jesus' teachings than most of the preachers of his so-called wisdom. That's what I've observed. If Jesus' teachings were so meaningful, they need only have that basis to work upon, not official doctrines, not manic preachings, not televangelists, not global dominance and the displacement of native cultures.... Hell, if Jesus' teachings were as assumed, churches should be obsolete.

But no. The basis of Christianity in practice has little to do with freedom and all to do with telling people which course they must accept in life. Given this situation, there's not one wonder, except by my naive fans, as to why organized religion is so heavily mocked by those who find fault with its prominence in our culture. For an art project at my university, some fellow students and I constructed a paper-maché Jesus. We placed him on a toilet, complete with a huge cross made of 4"x4" wood. We placed him on a street corner near downtown Reno, just a block or two from four different churches. It was Easter Sunday. To me, this symbolic gesture was no lower than the Christian industry's low-grade peddling of its pious paraphernalia—Stryper's patented bible toss, for example. At least our statement wasn't hiding under a bogus pretext.

I admit Jesus' teachings have merit. To some degree, I follow them myself. I would never call myself a Christian on that basis, so I don't find it necessary—or even appropriate—'to use the term "Christian punk." (I refuse to call myself punk too.) I don't need Jesus to learn morals when it's common sense to me, something that can be easily learned through life experience absent of mainstream religion.

If it takes religion to garner basic respect for others, then from only that standpoint can I see a small value in basic moral lessons being bandied about in punk land. All other theological babble can reside with the herd that carries on so frequently about their brand of piety. Which, basically, is what's happening right now within punk circles—be it religious leanings or otherwise. We can insert here adherence to D.I.Y. faith interchangeably and it wouldn't matter. Why? Because that's what we've asked for. We may as well be having shows in churches. Oh, wait—we already do!

That said, I've seen reason in not loathing Christians. Christianity, maybe, probably. But Christians, the people who proclaim being such or believe in that kind of monotheism, I consider to be purveyors of circumstance. Many of my friends are Christian, something I don't hold against them since I believe them to be good people with or without their religious beliefs.

Believers in Christianity haven't been exposed to other religions or philosophies as dominant as the Christian one, so, when raised with that mindset, it's natural for them to see Christianity as being the One Right Way. Who can blame them—or most people and their beliefs for that matter? It's like kids raised watching mainstream television—it would be stupid to expect them to see things as anything else but a representation of what happens on TV, and consequently, at the malls.

Fortunately for me, when I was a kid, my step-mom and dad deliberately didn't force a religion on me as their parents had (which they later rejected). Instead, they took us to church—once—and let my brothers and I decide if it was a place we should go back to. We thought it was boring as fuck, so why go back? Growing up with no pious sensibilities makes me see vividly how those who grew up with religion reflect their background. My grandmother once said our lack of belief in a—THE—god was "sad." From my oblivious perspective, her comment made no sense. I got on just fine without her god—I even paid to see Stryper for Christ's sake.

I thought, "So if I believe in this deity, then my condition is no longer 'sad'?" The logic didn't work. When I actually read the bible, I could see how, if you accept its premises, Christianity is unshakable as a belief system. It shouldn't be a surprise that I DO NOT accept the bible's premises because they make very little sense to me, just as the mall mentality makes no sense to me, or people who take pride in things they can't help: their race, gender, and so on. It's not something I can relate to.

My belief is that since Christianity has such prevalence in our culture—it is in the Constitution, after all—I find it important to seek whatever there is beyond Christianity or other mainstream religions for the simple reason that contemporary religion is not solving any worldly problems. I don't expect dominant religions are capable of pulling us out of the situation we're in, despite what they may claim. When you look at it carefully enough, the dominant religions are good contributors to we got to be the way we are. For that reason alone, I find little value in aligning with modern religion.

However, looking back in world history shows that the world's oldest religion still exists, barely, in increasingly limited cultures. It can be found, maybe even here. The first *Punk Planet* reader to tell me what that religion is gets a free subscription to *Punk Planet*, which I'll pay for out of my limited budget (but you must contact ME, not the mag).

The purpose of looking back far enough in history is to see how a world once got along, non-destructively as it mostly was. A guiding

force/mentality/religion/whatever, allowed for healthier lifestyles and communities. Imagine living free from mental illness, destructive behavior, addictions, stress, work, incessant violence, and all the other pleasant symptoms our culture loves to exhibit, even though it's dominated by a presumably peaceful and loving religion. Odd ain't it? The first one out there in line with what I'm saying will at the very least get a free sub. If you have at least one eye open, you'll be seeing a whole lot more. I'm pretty sure I can guarantee that.

As always, I can be reached at PO Box 9382, Reno, NV 89507. Or if you want to wait indefinitely to receive an email reply, I can be reached at bobc@cs.unr.edu



he smell of eucalyptus is hot and wet in the thick, suffocating air. The inside of this wooden box is like a rainforest, like a broken fever. I sit down on a towel, and hang my head between my knees, where the air is thinner. I can't tell whether the moisture which has appeared instantly all over my body is steam or my own sweat. I can feel my skin heating up, my wet hair becoming warm and the scent of whiteflower and olba clinging to my head like smoke. Someone else in the tiny sauna pours a spoonful of oily water over the coils, and instantly, the heat spreads and builds. I straighten up, my shoulders relax, and my hands fall folded into my lap. It is a sweet, cool, dark night outside, and I don't know how many more minutes I can withstand in this climate... I made a swift and smooth left turn, down into a long stretching avenue with a generous bike path. The sun was flashing like a camera shutter in between the trees and houses, showing in dapples that danced along the pavement. It was a warm day, with a cold breeze creeping under my clothes. Riding my bike home from work always gives me moments alone with my thoughts, coasting along, on a downhill slope. A chance to work things out, to make sense of things which had processed so sluggishly all day in that smothering office. Things that had gone around in futile circles or been avoided completely, become clear on my bike, flying through intersections and maneuvering around bits of debris in the road... Yesterday the cable went off. It was free cable, the unintentional free cable enjoyed by this house for well over a year. The cable company must have been doing a routine sweep and noticed that this particular line had accidentally been left on. So, they switched it off. And while I'll miss a double dose of The Simpsons every night at six, I breathed a sigh of relief and cleaned the house today, listening to tapes and public radio. A quiet house. A house free of televisionfree of the temptation. A house full of sounds, but no flickering, hypnotizing pictures... And as I rolled along, lightly fingering my brakes and watching the cars out of the corners of my eyes, I could sit and wonder about the horrible predictability of humanity, about why it is that people are so incapable of being up front, straightforward, saying how they really feel, and not being so tied down to fear and guilt and insecurity. Why is it that love has so much negativity and rules attached to it? Why are people such insufferable cowards? So much more content to run from desire than to confront their emotions and take steps toward realizing their dreams. So quick to disparage romance as folly and foolishness. So easy to admit loving someone in the heat of the moment, only to backtrack because of impracticality, or the timeless male terror of being trapped, captured, emasculated... I did see this one fucked up thing on tv a few weeks ago. This woman was a guest on a talk show, I guess she was a player in the new women's basketball league-but that wasn't the fucked up thing. The fucked up thing was when she revealed to the interviewer that she had nineteen brothers and sisters, that her mother had birthed twenty offspring, the audience's response was applause and cheers. I was disgusted. Disgusted not just by the complete disregard for population control and depletion of resources, but disgusted by the congratulatory response of the audience. My opinions are probably radical, but I think that women who produce more than five or six kids are quite irresponsible. Especially those who are biologically infertile and utilize modern technology in order to conceive. That's all we need: more mouths to feed, more humans to take up space and leave their shit lying all over the place, more humans that will, twenty years hence, breed like flies. Zero population: one baby for every couple. Western society is all linear, all short-term, no foresight beyond one's own lifespan. One woman having twenty children who all live to have children of their own. Am I the only one who finds this selfish? This is America, we have contraceptives... Henry Miller said, nearly fifty years ago, "If a woman is capable of inspiring love in one man, she must be capable of inspiring it in others. To love or be loved is no crime. The really criminal thing is to make a person believe that he or she is the only one you could ever love." I never used to be the kind of person who underlined things in books, but whenever someone writes something that inspires me—something I agree with fervently—I have felt compelled lately to make a mark on the page. It is more often with Miller, but also with Dorothy Parker. I have been in love a few times, to varying degrees. Love can be black or white, or it can be grey, depending on who you are. If I describe the person I was years ago as being silly and naive, then I can say that no, I was not in love, I merely imagined I was. But if I thought I was at the time, I guess that's all that really matters; the moment. The moment of feeling in love, never mind all the regrets and evaluations that inevitably follow the end of a relationship. For if all I do is tell myself, "that felt like love, but it wasn't really," then how am I supposed to be sure when the "real thing" comes along? Or will I only know long after my heart has been broken and I am left bitter and find it easy to dismiss what seemed so real?... I am left with a strange, satisfying hollowness after I have finished writing and pasting a fanzine. A feeling of satisfaction and accomplishment, which is quickly followed by an empty sense of boredom. I have realized the relationship between process and goal; how writing something can be a thousand times more fulfilling than the pleasure of completion, how making out with someone for hours can be infinitely supe-

rior to a quick and passionate fuck standing up against the wall, how the journey to a place can be far more interesting than the arrival at the destination. I finished my zine, but I have lots more to write, but no energy to bother with it. My least favorite part is the distribution—the business end... I don't usually get drunk, but I got drunk with him. He drank because he had to, I did because it was something different and fun. We drank beer near the ocean and flicked little ants off each other's clothes. He showed me how to break open licorice stems growing out of the ground and suck on them. They tasted like strong black licorice, pure and unsweetened, untainted. It seemed like a perfect day. We drank more wine in my bedroom, and he left a mark on my neck to show off to my friends. Then he left and was gone. I refused to try to convince myself we had done anything foolish or wrong. I knew I might not see him for a long time. I felt sick, I couldn't sleep. I called England and knew that this was where I actually would rather be anyway. My friend a million miles away suggested I go for a bike ride, I would feel better. It was two in the morning, and I was tempted to do it, in spite of being sick and clouded with doubt... This week I have felt less and less inspired to go to work, and more and more inspired to sit at home reading Sexus and having chips and dip and listening to all the wonderful mix tapes my friends have prepared for me. New bands, old bands, bands I love, bands no one has ever heard of. Tapes are seriously underrated in this CD-obsessed economy. I shall recommend some bands to you, since that seems to be a popular sport in the world of punk fanzine column-writing. POLARIS, from England. THE SEA AND CAKE, from Chicago. REX, from somewhere. THE VSS, from the East Bay. GRANDAD-DY, from Modesto. CHUMBAWAMBA, from Leeds, though I heard they signed to EMI recently-horrors! THE JAM, from London, about twenty years ago. And lots of other bands. I neglected the punk/indie/hardcore world for a while, as the scene here in the Bay Area was so unforgivably boring and derivative. But, there are lots of scenes elsewhere, and I am a bit more motivated and inspired and social lately... I can't tolerate the sauna anymore, it's infiltrating my pores, my lungs, my very soul. I stagger naked out into the night, beneath a sky of black shapeless velvet and the handful of stars close enough not to be obscured by the city's glare. Without hesitation, I travel four steps and sink immediately into a cold bath, up to my neck, gasping, exhilarated, alive. Later I am walking back through the Mission to the BART station, my muscles calmed and loose, my damp hair still carrying strong traces of eucalyptus...

By the time this sees print, I'll already be somewhere else, on a different continent, on the other side of the sea. Out of impatience and impulsiveness, partially inspired by our own Mr. Sinker, I moved my trip up to the month of August, and I'll be in Europe through the middle of September. When I return, with any luck, I'll be unemployed, and glad of it. I'll be ready to start doing something new. Spending every day realizing my potential and actualizing my dreams.—or at least trying to, anyway. Or just having chips and dip and riding my bike around instead of finding another job.

Finally, Hex #7 is complete. It lasts for 40 pages, it is replete with small stories, real and imagined, it was typed entirely on a very old type-writer. One dollar plus two stamps, please. Also feel free to write if you feel inclined. PO Box 989, Berkeley, CA. 94701. Cheers.

• • •



'm sitting in a diner half a block from my apartment building. I'm here to escape the heat of my apartment, the street, just about every place else I can think of. Most New Yorkers will sell their souls to get out of the city in the summertime. This afternoon, I leaned up against a wall in my apartment and it was actually warm to the touch, so I decided to get out. It's three o'clock on a Sunday afternoon; the diner is cool and full of people. The waiter is being good-natured about the fact that I'm not ordering very much. I'm sure he knows exactly why I'm here.

New York, I have decided, is a great fucking place so long as you're not looking for a job, looking for an apartment, or late for an appointment. For my first ten days in the city, I was forced to take a good hard look at my commitment to this whole New York thing. It took me longer to secure employment than I'd imagined it would. Ten zillion college students decided to graduate and look for work the very week I arrived. Fuckin' assholes. Meanwhile, our dickhead Republican mayor and governor were working hard to try to abolish all the rent control regulations in the city. The implications of this are staggering: landlord harassment, huge rent increases, mass exodus to Jersey City. In my personal situation, it means a threat to my cheap-by-NYC-standards-but-still-barely-affordable (but much beloved) rent-stabilized apartment. Rent stabilization simply means that they can only raise the rent a certain percentage: 12% when the lease changes hands, less than that when it expires but is maintained by the same person. If these regulations are lifted, rents will jack up hundreds of dollars per apartment all over the city and millions of people will simply have to move. Move where? Good question. As it is now, people can live somewhat more affordably in Brooklyn or Queens, but no doubt rents there will increase dramatically as well. Greedy corrupt landlords are looking at doubling or even tripling their incomes if they can just get their current tenants out and bring in new ones. Goons with baseball bats will be skulking around our doors. Our Mayor promised us a toll free hotline to report landlord misconduct. Thanks a lot Rudy, ya fuckin' dick. Basically, New York will be a city where only the rich will be welcome. It sounds like an exaggeration, but it's not. A "cheap" studio apartment costs \$750 here, realtors fees are based on a percentage of a YEAR's rent (to the tune of a grand or two up front) and most apartments require this fee and at least two months rent to sign a lease. This is the best case scenario. Often, small lousy apartments go for a grand or more, and three months rent up front, plus the fee, are expected. I got this apartment because I knew someone in the building and the previous tenant had skipped out on her lease-I got lucky. Even if you live with roommates, your rent-for a small amount of space-is likely to be over \$600 a month. It's true that wages are a bit higher here than they are

in some other parts of the country, but it's not proportionate to the cost of living. People work full-time jobs and live in closets, or tiny living rooms with no privacy. The only saving grace is that if you do manage to secure a rent-stabilized apartment, the landlord can't just raise the rent a few hundred bucks whenever they feel like it. It's easy to imagine why the mere idea of abolishing these controls struck fear in the heart of millions.

As it turns out, they're tabling the issue for a number of years—not out of the goodness of their hearts, mind you, but because they don't want to make themselves unpopular before the next election.

Speaking of heinousness, I went to a big zine conference in Chicago a few weeks ago. I even talked our fearless leader, Dan Sinker, into going. Hanging out with the esteemed Mr. Sinker and my friend Ed was the only redeeming factor of the event, with the exception of getting to meet Keffo, the editor of *Temp Slave!* Zine, a long-time favorite of mine. The panel discussion I attended would take several columns to cover, by the end of which I would likely short out my computer by so much frothing at the mouth. I cannot begin to describe the sheer depth of pretense and whining I witnessed in that short, but oh-so-long two and a half hours. The only moments of honesty and clarity came from Al Hoff from *Thrift Score*. The rest (I'll try to keep this brièf—I'm frothing already) was almost impossible to sit through. The theme of the discussion, in a nutshell, was that all these zinesters had gotten major book deals. The question on the table: Are they selling out? I should have known this would be unbearable. The obvious answer is "ves." the biggest problem was that no offe would own up to it.

Among the chief offenses were constant sneering references to Dishwasher zine as an example of what we're now, presumably, growing out of (the royal "we" here being "The Zine Community", which Dan rightly pointed out as an oxymoron). It's as if Dishwasher is the field slave, and a glossy "zine book" (do I hear another oxymoron?) published by Random House is abolition. "We", the "Zine Community" deserve to quit our day jobs so we can sleep till noon and publish zines that are way too expensive to produce and have nothing much to say. Spare me. Dishwasher is still an half-size Xeroxed zine at 50 cents an issue, and it's still one of the very best things out there, hands down. Another phrase I heard several times from one very annoying person in particular was "working writer." "I'm a working writer," she kept saying, and reminded us several times that she had a Master's degree, blah blah blah. I kept thinking, "so what am I? A lazy writer? An unemployed writer? A fucking worthless loser with a day job and a half-size black and white Xerox zine perhaps?" Fuck you.

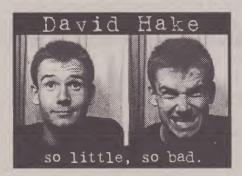
I'll try to wind this up. I do my little zine, Violation Fez, because I enjoy it and other people enjoy it. I do not get a paycheck from the universe for doing the zine. Furthermore, I do it cheaply enough that I can give it away without a second thought—and I do, often. I also do a lot of other kinds of writing that I don't get paid for. I have no trust fund. Life sucks and then you die. Most of my favorite zines are produced at three in the morning by overtired, overworked, broke assholes like myself. It's a zine, not a CAREER, for Christ's sake. I'm not against anybody making money on a zine, or paying themselves as editors. But don't sit there and whine about how you had to do it because your life is so hard. A zine like *Dishwasher* will never make real money because it only comes out when Pete wants it to and it only

costs 50 cents. You wanna talk about hard work? Try a restaurant kitchen. Whew! Okay, I think I'm done.

I've gone to see a number of bands in the past few weeks (trying to avoid Theatre). I saw Three to Six Inches at CBGBs this past week, and as always, they were great. They just get better and better. The fact that they're all good friends (the singer and bass player are, in fact, married) really shows through in their sound and their stage presence. They have a good time and enjoy each other's company which makes them fun to watch. Their songs tend to have a lot of edge-I'd even call it an angry sound, but it's never petulant or bitchy. Even when you can't understand the words, it's clear that they really have something to say. Three to Six Inches is on two compilations: Kitra: A Powerbunny 4 x 4 compilation (Powerbunny is a fanzine that has also started a record label) and New Brunswick Underground, which was put out by a guy who books shows at a club called The Budapest. Powerbunny will be putting out another compilation this winter, with many of the same bands.

Two other bands I saw and liked this past week were Cardinal Woolsey and Love Alien...Cardinal Woolsey has been around a long time. Love Alien is much younger. I really enjoyed the band, but the singer's schtick reeked a little of dumb-girl-singer-ism. I couldn't hear her voice that well, which might have had something to do with Arlene Grocery's PA, but her stage antics got a bit tiresome. My friend Darin and his band The Angie Band have a new 5-song demo out, including a slamming cover of Patti Smith's Pissing In A River, which I taught Darin last summer. Darin has been trying for a year now to get me to do that song on stage with him, but I am too chicken. I haven't played music on stage since I was a drunk 16-year-old. I have been going to hear jazz a lot lately, too-there is a ton of free jazz in the neighborhood suddenly, though it's probably not quite as sudden as it seems.

Violation Fez #6 IS out - \$1 or trade Violation Fez c/o Leah Ryan, PO Box 2228, Times Square Station, New York, BY 10108.



"I'm not an animal, I'm an abortion..."

ome day you will be a person far different from who you are now. Once it's all written, you'll push the space bar and back the whole thing into infinity—a historical backhoe to cover the manifest destiny of dreary certainty and "what was before," become the big lens on the "fuck all," and the triumph of the clever mind over the fearful body. Some day you won't stand to be one of "the kids." Some day the big arguments will have less to do with make believe and more to do with (something). "Anger is too indulgent, we only have time for action." Some

day you'll have real skills to build a machine which will neither be better or worse, but at the very least tangible, maybe, possibly, even formidable to somebody. It will be yours, it will have something to do with the present time, not another time that is always safely tucked away barely out of reach. It will be scientific, it will be quantifiable but it will also be ambitious, driven by a certain degree of imagination, not dogma and obligation. You will have your own reasons for progressing forward. It's come time to look around and ask some questions. Who's having fun here? Anything new will do. Anything bold or different.

You are headed for a collision course with the rudest awakening of your life that will mark you like a brand and you don't even see it yet. Nothing has been going on. Nothing has been accomplished. Nothing has been going on for a long, long time. You've been force fed the history of a millennium but what part have you had to play in it? The time of "we" is over, the big cause, the general statements, the subculture, the vacant clubhouse with the secret hand-shakes. The time of propaganda, manifestos, and uniforms gives way to the reality of the situation we've been in from the very beginning: Each and every one of us is on our own.

Sómeday your life may depend on your ability to exist as an individual. Someday you might need to question something and throw caution to the wind for the consequences. It's not for anyone but yourself. It's not because it might make you look good. All the rules will change when the spectacle falls down. Why play house and accept the terms dictated by culture?



his column is going to be a mishmash of various thoughts and short "essays" because I've been thinking about a lot of different moments and topics that I couldn't possibly write an entire column about individually.

I. Vegetables and Cows

Recently, I ran into an old acquaintance named Alex whilst shopping at Whole Foods (one of those horribly overpriced "health food stores" I'm unfortunately frequenting over the summer in lieu of any food co-op that may exist within 100 miles of my summer residence). He looked into my cart and remarked, "It's so nice to see someone your age buying vegetables." Since I've known the fella, he's always had a tendency to blurt out phrases like this that make you stop for a second to mull over, though not necessarily respond to. I thought about the vegetables comment and decided it wasn't derogatory (he also has the tendency to blurt out hideous insults uncontrollably). Alex told me that although he isn't vegetarian, when he lived in India he didn't eat meat. "You don't want to eat the meat over there," he explained. I laughed but (and you can call me stupid) I never quite caught on whether he meant his temporary vegetarianism was a result of the sacredness of the cow or poor quality meat. Does anyone know?

II. Fat vs. Skinny and No More Salt, Please

Not too long ago I was talking to somebody about health and obesity. Whoever I was talking to said, "These days, only the rich can afford to be skinny," which gave me pause. In theory, I liked this thought though I haven't really fleshed it out with solid thinking or—god forbid—evidence. Most people that try to eat cheaply either eat lots of vegetables (like me) or lots of crappy processed foods like ramen and macaroni and cheese (like I used to do). Most crappy processed food has a ton of fat and sodium (not to mention the dreaded MSG) that you wouldn't find in most homemade dishes.

Anyway, this is leading to 2 different areas: 1) the food that most people can afford to buy (both monetarily and time-wise, since most people probably don't have time to go to the grocery store once a week to keep fresh vegetables in their refrigerator) is shitty, fattening, and arteryclogging. I'm sure the corpulent CEO and emaciated homeless person stereotypes still hold to some extent, but I don't think skinny means undernourished as much as fat or obese means a bad diet (not necessarily overnourished or gluttonous). 2) For the first time in years, I tried out a new recipe: potato and leek soup. When I tasted it, it seemed flavorful and bland at the same time. Why? It barely had any salt in it. In the huge pot that I combined, among other ingredients, the 6 cups of chopped leeks, 4 cups of diced potatoes, and 6 cups of water, I only threw in a teaspoon of salt-substitute—a mere dash. So even though the soup was rich in flavor, it seemed bland because it wasn't salty. I've come to expect soups to be salty. Damn you, Campbell™! I also blame years and years of ramen consumption (MSG, anyone?) as well as a lifelong tendency to slop a bit too much soy sauce on my fried rice for the inability to enjoy my soup which took, due to my mind-boggling ineptitude in the kitchen, 3 hours for me to make.

In other words, perhaps obesity is a problem these days caused not by gluttony but by fattening cheap foods and the need to add more salt, ketchup, soy sauce, etc. than is necessary because of the dulling of taste buds by said foods over the years. Hello, have I lost you yet?

III. Am I P.C.? Who Cares?

In keeping with this health/nutrition slant, I thought I'd relate the following anecdote that has remained unverbalized in my mind for a while. I decided a couple weeks ago to go vegan by the end of the summer. When I told my vegetarian friends, they almost all said, "Man, I want to go vegan too." Whereas most of my omnivorous friends responded with astounded choruses of "what?" and "but why?" as if I were betraying a meat-eating-and-proud-of-it race. I get a similar response when I tell fellow Koreans I don't go to church. To this I want to say what someone eats is her or his personal choice and no one else's business (I know this is no news flash). Though it may reflect a certain lifestyle (especially in the case of vegan-

ism), it shouldn't necessarily be viewed as a divisive issue or label. People who think vegans on the whole are uppity (of course, some are) should hear some of the meat-eaters I know when you get them on to the subject of diet.

Anyway, even a year ago I never would have considered becoming a vegan and had counted myself amongst the ranks of the anti-P.C. crowd. Now, I feel this desire to convert everybody to my social/political beliefs but I don't act on it because you can NOT force people to care about those sorts of things. I should know--I've surrounded myself with liberal people since I was 13 but never took to their "hippie" ideals until recently-actually, several people have been joking about me becoming a hippie, a laughable thought if there ever was one. Unfortunately, many a time now I feel elitist-sounding comments bubble up that I suppress to avoid being a preachy jerk, comments I would have scathingly rejected as mere political correctness just a short time ago. I have always considered myself fairly multi-faceted with friends from all different walks of life and I still want to maintain that. As I find myself becoming angry and offended (i.e. more "P.C") more easily, I also find myself becoming goofier and less self-conscious at the same time. I still have the same friends I've always had and hope that my diet choices won't affect that.

IV. I'm an Asshole (Sometimes)

The last month of spring semester, I was so busy I hardly ever talked to anyone, even my roommates. I guess in that month, I lost all of my faculties regarding social skills because now, a month since I've finished school, I still hardly talk to anyone, even though all my nights are free. If someone says something that annoys me, I just ignore her/him. If I don't feel like talking to someone, I just walk away. If I meet someone who doesn't seem to be interesting initially, I make no attempt at small talk (which I hate anyway). In other words, I'm now constantly treading this fine line between frankness and rudeness whenever I'm in a social situation. I can't really help it even if I think I'm being an asshole and I don't want to be. I've gone to a few parties recently and each time, one of two things happened: I ended up sitting on a couch by myself for 20 minutes before deciding to leave, or I spent the entire time talking to one person exclusively. I can't imagine how I met the people I know because I apparently have forgotten how to meet people and be friendly. On one hand, I've started to feel kind of lonely, partially because I am one of those people always doing the work to maintain friendships and since I've stopped taking the initiative, I've realized that it's always me doing the calling and making plans. But on the other had, I kind of enjoy this solitude and am absorbing myself in books, Simpsons reruns, and my own thoughts. I can't help but wonder why the few people I consider my friends don't seem to need to talk to me and why all the new people I meet who seem interested in talking to me seem so stupid and insincere. Am I-gasp!-getting old and curmodgeonly?

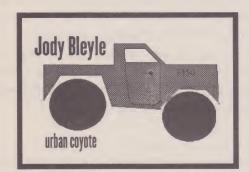
V. East Timore update

Apparently, the U.S. is not going to be selling those F-16 bombers to Indonesia. Hurray! Mr. Dickhead Suharto got impatient with the U.S.'s indecision regarding the matter and has dropped the idea and is

looking toward other sources. The situation in East Timor is still fucked up though. I'm still offering to send photocopies of articles on the situation and the ETAN (East Timor Action Network) newsletter for those who send me a SASE. If you do not send a SASE (and no one has so far) with your request, it will take much much longer for me to send it to you.

Hey kid who I sent my book East Timor: Genocide in Paradise to: fucking send it back to me already!

Write to me at k-bae@students.uiuc.edu or PO Box 2110 Urbana, IL 61825-2110 (a stamp for a reply would be much appreciated). Bands who want to play in Urbana-Champaign or need a place to stay, drop me a line.



e are on the loose, not on the mend. In 1978, I went to California for the first time. The Doobie Brother's "What a Fool Believes," and Gloria Gaynor's "I Will Survive," were getting some serious radio rotation. I roller skated in Golden Gate Park on Sunday when they close it off to traffic. I saw a Gay Rights parade with naked men running down the street with ice cube trays on their heads in Berkeley.

By the time I made it back to San Francisco, it was October 1987 and I had come on the train from Portland, Oregon with two friends. One of those friends had lived across the street from me when we were 2-4 years old in Enfield, Connecticut. He wore my barrettes, I played his toy drum set and guitar and made him pee standing up with me under the pine tree in his back yard. The other of those friends had made a drum set out of pails, including a kick drum, that sounded and felt as good as any I'd ever played. We stayed in a hostel off Market Street that was for Europeans only, but they felt sorry for us and let us stay. We got our personalities screened by L. Ron Hubbard in some marble building near City Hall and found out we needed a lot of help. Sitting in that huge empty white room waiting for our test results, the urbane coyote had already taken hold. The drum maker had escaped and I followed her when she ran by the front door. I ate pigeon shit off the newspaper dispensers in front of City Hall. I didn't go back to play chess with the Swedish boys, Addidas sweat pants tucked into their socks, that night or any other. I scratched my itch against a rubber tire. Traded the other half of my train ticket to some graduate student on the lam for a yellowed Apple IIC with a broken drive. He said he'd written a movie script on it called Witness.

I moved in with a beautiful woman the week it got cold in November

of 1989 and ended up staying until December of 1993. She kept me a secret and I kept her satisfied. Kept her away from the television. I'd score her pot. I told her that I'd met Allen Ginsburg's best friend. She asked if I knew Dorothy Allison's best friend. Our days passed seamlessly. Reading to each other, riding our bikes on acid. But eventually, the understanding we had conceived grew thick and fed on us. She said she wanted me doggie style, and I was gone. Her risk taken was my excuse to run, as they say. But still, I was spineless. When it was cold three more times, I was back at her door. I had been eating on the street and my last meal had been human shit. It was an accident—that happens, as they say. She gave me some cognac and I sensed her deep emotion. We climbed into bed that night, as we had so many times, and she read to me as I fell asleep. "The wicked flee when no one pursues, but the righteous are as bold as a lion..." Had she chosen this passage by accident? I drifted.

A woman, as they say, has many sides. As does every coyote.

I spent the rest of that winter reading everything I could find by Leslie Feinstein. The Apple had sat in the closet too long. I was ready for Sci-Fi, or so I thought. I needed an objective, something independent from and existing outside of my mind. But I was no writer—I was a coyote in a city with a leash law and a housing shortage that left people shitting on the streets. I changed my objective to the differentiation and classification of fecal matter. I wanted to be the best. My girl was starting to recycle and can roots and jams. These were things I tried to share with her, but I found myself inadequate. Our understanding was now gaunt, but the independence we had intended and hoped for had grown as simple loneliness, and I feared my own feet. But we found each other by accident in the pantry. After I licked her clean we talked about jars. Ball jars, of course. But, as they say, a ship is never skin deep.

We spent the spring collecting glass jars with lids. The bus across the Golden Gate Bridge, which seemed too great a luxury, ended up being our most practical and necessary expenditure. A poet we loved had told us of Tamalpais, and there, at the bottom of the mountain, was a woman who sold us jars unbelievable and indescribable, and still left us enough for fare home.

I sampled and cataloged shit from around the city. I was no longer urbane. This was something I had started for myself, before I knew that a masterwork could exist. I still assert that it was created not by me, but by the people who named it. Yet this seemed to create more distance. My meticulously labeled jars were found in back of the house by a friend of hers. I was thrust into the art world. I was introduced to artists who had "eaten pigeon shit" too. "Nationalize," I said, "we are alike." "Unionize," I heard in reply.

But it wasn't enough for me. None of it. I wanted to be able to banish parts of our whole. Exile. To an island with you. Think before you act, find a way, make it happen. One chance. I was embattled. Unable to make love. Uninterested in shit. Beyond desperate. I had bought a gun from my downstairs neighbor. She said it could "return me to my maker." But I was godless. "Hear how I groan, and there is none to comfort me." So I let it sit by my side. Temptation to sin, temptation to sin, pluck it out, throw it to a coyote.

* Columns **



hen I was first living away from home, there was a newspaper rack down on the corner. It was the old-fashioned kind, not the machines they have now, but just a rack of papers and a little tube into which you could drop your dime (yes, this was a long time ago).

It may be hard to believe for you younger folks, but in those days newspaper racks operated on the honor system. There was nothing to stop you from taking a paper (or all of them) for free.

Being more or less unburdened by a conscience at the time, I naturally helped myself to a free paper every morning. This went on for a few months, until one day I discovered that the old rack was gone, replaced by a newfangled machine where you couldn't get a paper without paying first. What's more, the price had gone up to 15 cents.

I was so irate that I dropped my 15 cents in the slot and took out all the papers. When I got home, I started complaining to my roommates about what a lousy place the world was turning into, where nobody trusted anyone anymore.

While I was a fairly oblivious 18 year old, I wasn't completely stupid, so of course I realized that just maybe my stealing newspapers had helped contributed to this growing lack of trust on the part of the newspaper sellers of the world. And I had mixed feelings about this.

On one hand, it was kind of exciting to think that my actions could have that powerful an effect. In my own small way, I was contributing to a change in the way people lived and did business. At the same time, I felt a twinge of sadness, realizing that I, with the millions of other baby boomers just then beginning to come of age, were chipping away at the social contract, and that as a result, life would never be quite the same again.

Such reflections weren't enough to keep me from continuing to steal and break any other laws I felt like; it would be several years before I began to see why it's not necessarily a good idea to do something just because you can get away with it.

I wasn't the only one of my generation who had that attitude, either, because beginning then, in the mid to late 60s, crime of all kinds, from petty theft to rape and murder, began increasing drastically. The world indeed would become a very different place, and not always a better one.

Much is said about how awful and repressive things were in America before the countercultural and political rebellions of the 1960s, and some of it is true. My principal memories of childhood in the 1950s are of a prolonged misery, in which everyone was afraid of what the neighbors might think, and the few people who dared to dress or act differently from the norm were routinely ostracized and abused.

The opportunities open to women, whether in their work or personal life, were extremely limited. There was no birth control, abortion was completely illegal, and employers would think nothing of telling you straight to your face, "No, this job is for men only."

For black people, it was even worse; South African-style apartheid was still the law of the land in a large part of America, and even in the supposedly more liberal North, segregation in housing, education, and employment was the rule rather than the exception.

Theoretically everything is much better now, although anyone, radical or reactionary, would probably agree there's still great room for improvement.

But there are many different types of freedom, and while we've gained in some ways, it's safe to say we've lost in others. For example, while a woman can work in ways and places that were unthinkable 40 years ago, she has lost the freedom to walk safely down the streets of most of our big cities.

While black people have gained the right to better jobs and integrated housing, vast numbers of them now live in conditions far worse than those that existed in the ghettoes of the 1950s. While they can now attend schools formerly closed to them, the quality of education offered there has declined precipitously, to the point where few parents of any race want to see their kids in public schools if they can possibly afford other options.

Just as it might be difficult for young readers to imagine a world so trusting that merchants would leave newspapers unguarded on the street at night, it's probably hard to imagine that at one time here in America women and children could freely walk around most streets in relative safety. But it's true; when I was nine years old, my parents used to put me on a bus by myself to downtown Detroit to take my piano lesson. These days, a parent setting a kid that age loose in the downtown of any big city might be arrested for child abuse.

Even the ghettoes, depressing and poverty-stricken as they were, were an oasis of safety and stability compared to, say, East Oakland today. As a teenager, I often used to go wandering around the black neighborhoods of Detroit, and never once was I threatened or harassed by anyone.

In fact, the reason my friends and I liked to go down there was because it was such a lively and friendly community. On summer nights there would be people everywhere, hanging out on porches and apartment steps, listening to music, carrying on, and having a great old time, quite unlike the rather sterile and stultifying climate of the all-white districts.

Yes, the crime rate was higher there, but still far less than you'd find today even in a "nice" city like Berkeley. And there was nothing remotely like the constant fear of drive-by shootings and random unprovoked violence that makes our modern urban ghettoes a nightmare for residents and visitors alike.

Okay, okay, you're probably saying by now, so things were better in the good old days, what else are you going to tell us about, grandpa?

If that's what you're thinking, I don't blame you; nobody enjoys hearing older people rattling on about society going to hell in a handbasket. But you'd be missing my point.

As I said, some things are a whole lot better today. I offer myself as a case in point; if the social climate hadn't changed drastically since the

1950s, I doubt I would still be here today. As a gay person, I couldn't even make love with my boyfriend back then without risking 20 years in prison. Even admitting that I had a boyfriend, or had thought about having one would make me a complete outcast.

As someone who didn't want to follow a normal route of school, job, marriage and kids, I could have been left completely out of the main-stream of American society if that mainstream hadn't shifted and broadened considerably.

So what, you ask? What's wrong with being left out of society? Can't you always just go join the punks?

The difference was that in those days there were precious few places, outside of the penitentiary or the graveyard, for people who couldn't or wouldn't fit in. I always assumed that one of those two would be my destination; I was surprised one day when I realized I had made it past the age of 21 with brain and body still reasonably intact, and having spent no more than a week or two of my life behind bars.

At any rate, I don't think countercultures like punk or hippiedom were ever any real escape from society. At their best, they provided a temporary oasis where young people could take a breather while they re-assessed their values and adopted a new, hopefully improved approach to life. At their worst, they represented the same sort of hedonistic self-indulgence that drives right wing Republicans and corporate fat cats. The costumes, the music, and the mood-altering substances may have been different, but the philosophical orientation very much the same: the world revolves around me, and if it doesn't, the world must be out of order.

Before you take up arms against me for dissing the punks, let me hasten to say that I'm not singling them out. Nearly every social group and every individual is to some degree guilty of excessive self-interest, and if helps, you've always got the perfect excuse: society made you that way.

People have always been prone to look out for themselves, of course, ever since the first caveman saved himself the trouble of having to go hunting by bashing his neighbor's head in and stealing his food. So what's different today? Not much, you might think, from the looks of things in any given city street or suburban shopping mall.

But while, once again, many of you are a bit young to remember this, there was this social experiment that was tried after the people stopped living in caves, and which for quite a while seemed as though it might be getting somewhere. It was called civilization, in case they haven't taught you about it at school, and on the face of it, it seemed like a fairly good idea.

The notion was that we would live in groups and agree not to rob or kill or otherwise molest each other, except maybe on weekends, and that as a result, life would be easier for everyone. Once people don't have to spend every minute hunched over their meager possessions for fear someone will take them away, it's amazing what they can find time to do. Build great cities, for example, and invent things, and discover music and art and maybe even have a little fun.

But civilization has always had its detractors. You may have heard of some of them; Attila the Hun, for example, didn't think people should be

living in cities and having a gay old time. As far as he was concerned, cities were for looting and burning and raping and pillaging. He'd feel rather at home in the late 20th century, don't you think?

Some commentators have theorized that all of history consists of the struggle between the city-dwellers and the nomads (or barbarians, as their detractors like to call them). I think that's rather over-simplified, and while I normally have a fondness for gross simplifications (how else do you suppose I could have written for punk rock magazines all these years?), it's not sufficient to explain our current condition, not least because these days barbarians are most likely to be found living right in the heart of the city.

When I toss around the word "barbarian," it's important to note that I'm not only talking about the fellow who jumps out of an alleyway and kills you to get money for crack. Such people can be a terrible nuisance, but are they any worse, really, than the nicely dressed man who shows up on your doorstep with an eviction order so that he can level a few city blocks to erect another concrete behemoth in which to store all the money he's making from butchering the rainforest or force-feeding cancerburgers to an oblivious American public?

Well, you get my drift—such people are also terrible nuisances, and there does seem to be an awful lot of them about these days. But barbarism, like charity, begins at home (five effete esthete points to the first to name that tune), and what I'm suggesting here is that all of us are eagerly participating in our own demise while operating under the glorious delusion that we are simply being free to be you and rife.

Nowhere in the history of the world, at least not that I'm aware of, has the cult of individual freedom reached the proportions it has here in America. In that sense at least, America does indeed represent the pinnacle of human development (what other culture on this planet, or nearby star system for that matter, could have produced such disparate wonders as Beavis and Butthead and the God-given right of certifiable lunatics to carry semi-automatic weapons?).

But kidding aside (fat chance), the trend throughout the past couple thousand years of what has passed for human evolution has been for ever greater emphasis on the importance of the individual self. For those of you with short attention spans, Dr. Frank of the Mr. T Experience has thoughtfully condensed this theme into a one and a half minute epic punk rock song called "The Complicated History Of The Concept of The Soul," but it probably wants some updating, since the good Doctor was primarily concerned with the metaphysical, while we Now 90s types are more inclined to follow in the footsteps of that other pop philosopher, Olivia Newton-John, by getting very physical.

Frank also probably had a hard time finding a good rhyme for Alexis de Tocqueville, or I'm sure he would have included him in the song, since Mr. de Tocqueville was one of the first to notice that the American penchant for individuality über alles might finally, ironically, be the undoing of all that freedom, that this great country was supposed to preserve. And without freedom, there goes the individuality, because it's straight back to the anthill existence that was the common experience for most humans before we managed to get this civilization thing up and running.

De Tocqueville, writing in the 1830s, foresaw a time when Americans would become so obsessed with their garish possessions and their slap-dash ideologies that they'd barely be able to talk to each other anymore, and that as a result, the internet would be invented... oh, all right, I digress, but in a reasonable direction. He also said that if we weren't able to maintain a well-educated population with a sense of common values and mutual obligation, our noble experiment in democracy wouldn't stand much of a chance.

It wasn't that he was anti-American, not by a long shot. Like many intelligent and idealistic Europeans, he was cheering all the way for America. After centuries of warfare and blood feuds and entrenched stupidity, Europe was more than ready for something new. Well, actually, they were ready to let someone else try something new, because they weren't about to take such radical chances with their own setup.

See, it's like this: ever since people began gathering together in tribes and clans, which gradually developed into villages and towns, what mattered most had been the group, not the individual. In those days, John Kennedy's much-quoted "Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country" wouldn't have been some high-minded platitude, it was the unquestioned law of the land.

Except for a few nobles and chieftains at the top, most people had very little sense of individuality. They were identified and valued in terms of their function in society. While this sounds very oppressive by modern standards, it wasn't completely bad; at least people had a sense of belonging and knew where they fit. There existed a type of security that's nearly unimaginable today: as long as the group did all right, you would probably be all right too, because you were needed. Contrast that with America in 1997, the richest country in the history of the world, where the only people not constantly scared of losing what they have are those who have nothing to lose.

The downside was considerable, though. Personal freedom was extremely limited, and your chances of breaking out of whatever social status you were born into even more so. You might be the next Leonardo da Vinci (or di Caprio), but if your parents were potato pickers, you'd be unlikely to ever make it out of the spud patch yourself.

Obviously things couldn't go on like that forever—if nothing else, it was too boring—and sure enough, once society recovered from various barbarian invasions and empire collapses and started accumulating some wealth and technology, everything began to change quite rapidly. Towns turned into cities, and, much like today, ambitious young people (along with the usual louts and layabouts) came flooding in, in search of the bright lights and the big bucks.

Freed from the constraints of old-fashioned families and religious leaders, they developed new ways of thinking and living, the dominant theme being the realization of the individual self. Through the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, and the Industrial Revolution, the individual gained greater freedom and greater responsibility for his or her own well-being. Millions weren't prepared for this transformation, of course, and didn't prosper at all. And it's safe to say that if a vote had been taken, the vast majority of people would have chosen to leave things the way they were before.

But economic and social forces are seldom interested in popular opinion, and the industrial revolution gave birth to full-fledged capitalism, which may represent the ultimate triumph of individual interests over those of society. Or, if you believe its defenders, the ultimate and best guarantee of personal freedom.

And here's where we come in. As the twentieth century grunts and whimpers to a close, we can look back on a hundred years in which the human condition may have changed more rapidly and radically than in all the centuries and millennia that preceded it. And yet, with all the transformations in technology and industry and politics, the overriding question, at least in the advanced countries, has been: "Where do I fit into all this?"

There is a degree of social alienation that would have been unimaginable even when I was a child. Few people feel like citizens of their own block, let alone their city or their country. In fact, with the continued fragmentation of the family, few people feel like citizens of their own house; we could be evolving toward a society in which everyone lives alone in a separate cubicle and communicates with others, if at all, electronically.

An extreme view, yes, but not a completely illogical progression from where we've been headed: Do I think that things will actually turn out that way? Hopefully not, and here's why.

All social change takes place in pendulum-like swings, with the prevailing mood shifting radically in one direction, then not quite so radically back in the other, and so forth, until ideally reaching some sort of stable midpoint. Humans being the way they are, a great deal of excess is committed along the way, but you can't make an omelet, etc...

What I'm here to argue is this: while total and absolute personal freedom may sound like a great idea, there's no such thing. And the refusal of people to accept that has led us to the brink of a disastrous disintegration of the society that makes possible what freedom we do have.

Think of it this way: while kids gripe about how fascist their parents are for not letting them go to the punk rock show, chances are that if there were no families (each one of them a society in miniature) there would be no punk rock shows and no punks, because all the little darlings would be working 16 hour days in the fields or factories instead of drawing allowances and lollygagging around the house until they're 18 or 21.

In other words, the same societal structure that oppresses us makes it possible for us to oppose that oppression. The multitude of cultural and political movements that have sprung up in modern times could 'hever have happened if people didn't have unprecedented amounts of free time and disposable income, all created by the same capitalist system they love to hate.

So should we just grin and bear the excesses of the system, and go on developing our own personal value systems and cultures? Not at all; in fact, just the opposite. What I'm suggesting is that neither the system nor our own personal freedom has much chance of surviving unless we begin to find ways of harmonizing the two.

It's not just punks, you see, who have fallen into the habit of saying "I don't give a fuck about society." You may show your disdain by writing graffiti or breaking bottles or standing on a street corner scaring old ladies

with your boombox. Joe Businessman may show his by building another gas station or parking lot, by raising everybody's rent, by dumping toxic waste into the air or water. Same principle; you're both prepared to uglify and brutalize society for your own personal satisfaction. The main difference is the scale on which you operate.

Or put it this way: you may feel you have every right to steal from the supermarket because "it's a big corporation and I'm poor." Well, here comes a fellow down the street, and he's even poorer than you, and he feels he has a perfect right to shoot you in the head and take what you just stole from the supermarket.

Whoa, you say, that's way different! Well, sure it is, but one thing is the same: each of you is making up your own law, one that suits you. Who are you to say that stealing is all right but murder isn't?

Well, let's go to the other extreme, then. Does this mean we should blindly obey any and all laws, no matter how stupid? Should people really never touch a beer until they turn 21, never cross the street until the light turns green, even if there's not a car in sight? I'll leave you to decide that for yourself (since I'm such a responsible person, you're certainly not going to catch me advocating that people ever break the law!).

But seriously, what I'm getting at is that there has to be some sort of middle ground, where personal and societal needs can cease being at war with each other. More and more I'm convinced that there is almost no difference between extreme right-wingers and extreme left-wingers; both operate on a totally idiocentric basis of "my way or the highway." And that goes double or triple for anarchists. They're the ultimate egoists, the social equivalent to the pre-Copernican flatheads who insisted that the universe obviously revolved around the earth.

I'm very big on what people have come to call "the radical center," the idea that what is truly forward-looking today is to find ways of reaching a broad consensus stretching across all of society about what can work for all or most of us, and does the least possible harm to those who may inadvertently get left behind. I'm sick to death of factions and cults and alienation and disillusionment. I'm even more tired of delusional people thinking that by ignoring the existing political structures, they can somehow make them go away.

I was in England during the recent election, and one particularly outspoken woman wrote a column for the Guardian titled "Won't Vote, Don't Care" in which she put forth the usual punk/anarchist philosophy about "all the politicians are the same." The day after the election, she contributed another article called "What The New Government Must Do For Women."

A number of readers responded with typically acerbic English wit, to the effect of what a useless twit this woman must be. Why on earth, they asked, should the new government be interested in her opinions? She had already taken herself out of the loop. If she wanted anything done for women, she could bloody well do it herself.

I found, to my surprise, something similar among most of my friends. Since they'd been moaning forever about how the Conservative government had been ruining Britain and making their lives absolute hell, I assumed that they would at least go to the polls and vote to get rid of it. No, they

said, the Labor Party is too right wing now, and besides, they never voted, it wasn't worth the bother.

Well—to employ a characteristically American phrase—like duh! If the Tories ruled Britain for 17 years, it was because people voted for them and/or didn't vote against them. And if the Labor Party moved to the right, it was largely because the whiners, grousers and self-involved navel-gazers of the left couldn't be bothered to support them. A political party has to go where the votes are—it may be a dirty fact of life, but that's just the way it is.

Same story here in America, of course. You're mad at Clinton because he keeps pandering to the right? Well, if he didn't do that, we'd have Dole or somebody even worse as president today, because you so-called progressives refuse to lift a finger for any political action that doesn't fit exactly into your own personal scheme of things. So you sit there listening to your Crass CDs or your Noam Chomsky speeches waiting for the revolution and/or Armageddon. Never mind that if either of those unlikely events occurs in your lifetime, they're going to land straight on your smug and complacent head.

The next few years are going to bring about major changes in the way we live, I predict, but probably not in the way most of you think. The end of a century usually unleashes great upheaval and tumult, but the beginning of a new one usually brings about a calming down, a consolidation of what has been gained over the past and a winnowing out of what is pointless and unpleasant. It's popular to say that American is becoming more conservative, but I don't think that's true. It's becoming more moderate, which is quite a different thing. It's growing up, at last. If America were a person, the twentieth century would have been its teenage years.

And just as people in their 20s often find it's not possible or desirable to go through life with a pierced nose and a permanent sneer (unless they're in Rancid, of course), Americans as a whole are going to have find new and better ways of getting along with each other, because with the frontier now pretty much paved over, we really don't have much place else to go but into each other's arms. As good old Ben Franklin put it way back at the beginning, "We must all hang together, or we are sure to hang separately."



ndia is a land of extremes. Depending on when you go, seasonal climate can be a nightmare. In it's monsoon season, there are torrential rainstorms every day—unapologetically flooding any village in their way. In the summer, they say only a fool goes out of his house in the scorching afternoon heat. In the winter months, mornings are cold and

become more bitter with an ice cold shower to wake you up—but by day's break, people are seen swimming and without coats. Perhaps the best time to go is during a period called "kartik." It could be the only moderate feature India has.

My first trip was a year ago, a month before kartik. I'd just come home from a painful summer tour and I wanted to get out of my current situation badly. I didn't have the money, so I called up Jordan at Revelation and asked him if I could take a \$1000 advance from future Texas is the Reason royalties. He agreed, albeit reluctantly, and I ran uptown to reserve my ticket and apply for a visa. Everyone thought I was being a bit whimsical, and to some extent I was. It's just that this time, I didn't really care.

August 27, 1996: Three planes. Two layovers. Twenty-four hours. I'd probably have gone out of my mind if it weren't for the fact that I slept through most of it—I'm just not that good at staying in one place for very long.

Including myself, there were three of us. Dhanurdhara Maharaj, my guru, originally came from Brooklyn. He still has a pretty heavy New York accent for someone who lived in Vrindaban, India from 1972 to 1994. There, he was a school teacher and eventually the headmaster for the Bhaktivedanta Swami Gurukula—an international school for Hare Krishna kids. I met him on one of his summer visits to America in 1991. His direction and advice have not only been incalculably useful to me, but have changed my life indefinitely.

Then there was Porcell. He's the kind of guy that everyone wants to have around when they're nervous about something: He's almost always unrealistically optimistic, easily makes you laugh, and is actually quite sincere about life when everything else is stripped away. Porcell was kind of like my Indian "commercial break." I'm into things that are deep and serious, yeah. But sometimes you have to have fun, too.

No lie: The very first person I saw when I got off the plane was Gwen Stefani from No Doubt. She wasn't actually there in Delhi with me, but she was close—singing on TV, overlooking passport control. I wondered if she realized that she was haunting me via satellite. And I couldn't help but think that this girl lent backing vocals to Gameface's versions of "Diff'rent Strokes" and "Time After Time."

Ironically, Maharaj—who has had to leave India before based on visa problems—was let inside without any problem. Porcell, on the other hand, was given a scrutinizing eye.

Remember those dorky looking passport photos that Revelation used on a Youth of Today ad once in 1989? Porcell still has the same one: Disheveled hair, headphones around his neck, and sunken black eyes on an unhappy face. That picture, I thought, is so not him. I actually didn't blame the guy for sending Porcell into the back room to be questioned by the authorities. It's hard to believe that this clean cut, happy-go-lucky, saf-fron-clad Krishna was the same person who posed for that photo almost eight years ago.

Five minutes later, the passport was stamped.

Part of my bad luck, I figure, is that I was standing right behind Porcell in line. My passport has been beaten up thoroughly since it was issued in 1993: Pages are ripped, the cover is bent, and—probably most incriminating—there are air bubbles around my photo. Already in the mood of prosecution, the immigration officer told me that he believed my passport could be a fraud and that I should sit down while they begin further investigation. I waited for almost an hour until Porcell and I started raising some hell.

Here's a bit of advice: Raising hell in India attracts a crowd. So unless your objective includes a dozen Indian men screaming at each other in Hindi, it's just not a good idea. Instead of accomplishing anything, I further detracted from my passport's credibility. And now they were saying it might be days until they could get in touch with the US Embassy. Can you imagine the anxiety I was feeling?

Luckily, Porcell had an ace up his sleeve.

"I'm sorry to bother you," he said, "but it's my friend's first time to India and he's feeling quite upset about this whole thing. Our only reason for coming was to see Krishna in Mathura. Isn't there anything you could do?"

The man's eyes lit up. "Krishna! Accha! You are going to Vrindaban?" "Yes," I responded in a pseudo-Indian dialect. "We are students of Bhaktivedanta Swami. You know?"

"Of course I know! Where is your passport?"

I handed it over, along with my birth certificate, bank card, and Social Security card. He looked it over and placed two large red stamps in it's pages—just like that. He waved good-bye: "Okay, sahib. Go to Vrindaban. See your Krishna. I cannot stand to be in your way."

The new issue of *Commodity*, a fanzine I generally look forward to reading, mentioned that an Indian friend of theirs said that "real" Hindus look at American Krishna devotees as some sort of joke. My experience was different though: If I hadn't come "to see Krishna," I realized, I may not have gotten in at all.

Honestly, after only a few hours, I was beginning to doubt whether or not I could last an entire month in India. The air is thick from layers of car exhaust and the cab ride from Delhi to Mathura was ridiculous with it's strong turns, near-accidents, and relentless honking. Still, I noticed a difference as we got closer to Vrindaban. With every kilometer, the rough and turnble city life of Delhi was quickly dissipating into simple village life. And almost every one I saw was wearing sacred clay on their foreheads. I began feeling comfort in the familiarity.

Whether or not Krishna worship "belongs" in the punk scene is debatable. One thing, however, became increasingly clear: It is not a fabrication created to sucker young kids into brainlessly chanting mantras, but an ancient process that became the foundation for much of India, and specifically, the district that we had begun to enter. Mathura is the site of Krishna's birth. Vrindaban is where He grew up.

August 28, 1996: There has to be an easier way to make a living. Rickshaw drivers generally look old and rugged—most of them peddle around barefoot. They ring their bells—you know, the kind you had on your bike when banana seats were "in"—and scream at pedestrians and

oncoming traffic. They often fit three or four people on a bike and most of the roads are unpaved and difficult to ride. Using any sort of logic, you'd figure that the Indian rickshaw driver would have the highest paying job in the country, but that's just not the case. Our fifteen minute ride to the Loi Bazaar shopping district was 12 rupees—approximately 35 cents. The worst part is that, as Americans, we got ripped off. They usually get six rupees for that ride—tops.

August 29, 1996: Dhanurdhara Maharaj set up a small tour of the school for me. He knows that I'm thinking about coming here to teach eventually.

We stopped at Room 18, on the second floor. Ananda-Vrindaban, an American woman, was in the middle of an English class with a group of seventeen boys—younger ones, mostly.

Next door, Yasoda dasi was giving another group of boys, aged 10 or 11, a different English class based more on reading than writing. When I walked in the room, they stood up from their desks and placed folded palms before me, addressing me as "Prabhuji"—a Sanskrit term that denotes an attitude of servitude to it's subject. These boys absolutely melted my heart.

Yasoda roped me into a writing exercise that involved having the class interview me. Questions were fired, one by one: "Where are you from?" "Why did you come to Vrindaban?" and my personal favorite, "What was your name before you became a devotee?"

My name is still, um, Norm.

September 1, 1996: I bought a couple of ice cold Frootis to 'go with breakfast today. Frooti tastes almost like mango Snapple but is twice as sweet and served in a box. I was walking away from the temple with two empty cartons in my hand when I noticed a couple of monkeys eyeing me up and down. I've heard a lot about Vrindaban monkeys before: They'll take the food right off your plate, the money right out of your pocket. They've even been known to steal people's glasses right off their face in exchange for food—only to break the glasses anyway. When one monkey stepped up to me and took a swing, I lost it.

"Holy crap!" I yelped. "Porcell, what do I do?"

Having seen it all before, Porcell knew how it felt to have a primate only half your size slap you around. His tone was urgent, "drop the boxes, Norm! Drop the boxes!"

The second those empty Frooti boxes hit the dust of Govardhan, the monkeys congregated around them—squeezing those very last sips. They scared the hell out of me. But I couldn't help but notice how cute they were sipping Frooti with a straw.

September 10, 1996: In India, the act of circumabulating holy places is called "parikrama." Most parikramas are done barefoot as an act of reverence. It's the same reasoning for taking your shoes off before walking into any Indian home or Hindu temple.

By this point we were in Mayapur, West Bengal. Like Vrindaban, Mayapur also has special significance to Krishna devotees, so we went on a walking trip to visit the holy places. Keep in mind, India in September can be brutal. Sometimes the temperatures hit upwards of 100 degrees or more. I didn't realize it because when we hit the road at 5AM, the ground was still cool. After finishing breakfast at 9, however, the black tar ground we walked on had become a virtual frying pan. I remember jumping up and down, skipping, even walking on tippy-toes to somehow avoid the pain. Maharaj noticed and smirked, "It's pretty ridiculous, huh?"

Finally, I ran to the edge of the road and began walking on the grass. My mind was cleared from the pain, so I tried analyzing everyone else's reactions to the heat. Most of the westerners were shaking, biting their lips, and walking on. One woman in the back looked a lot like me—burned out to the verge of tears. The Bengalis, however, were different. They didn't seem the slightest bit affected and they casually finished the parikrama without disturbance.

How could they have done it with smiles on their faces? Try taking your shoes off on a hot summer day and walk across a black street barefoot. If you're still smiling when you get to the sidewalk, I'll consider accepting your version of happiness, too.

There was so much more to Vrindaban: Elderly widows walking ten minutes worth of stairs just to see a Krishna deity on a hill in Varshana. Saints living in caves, carrying only a waterpot to bathe and a stick to walk with. Groups of men and women, covered in ash, incessantly singing songs for their Lord. And how could I leave out Radha-kunda, scripturally considered the holiest place in the universe? It's impossible to relate the story of my submersion in Her waters.

What does it all mean? This column, like everything I write, is an extension of my experience and description of my life thus far. It's personal and I don't expect you to understand everything. If I could do something with this particular piece though, it would be this: Realize that there are worlds parallel to yours. You may never see them and you may never experience them, but that doesn't mean they aren't real. These cultures fill the lives of many. If you can't relate, then at least show respect.

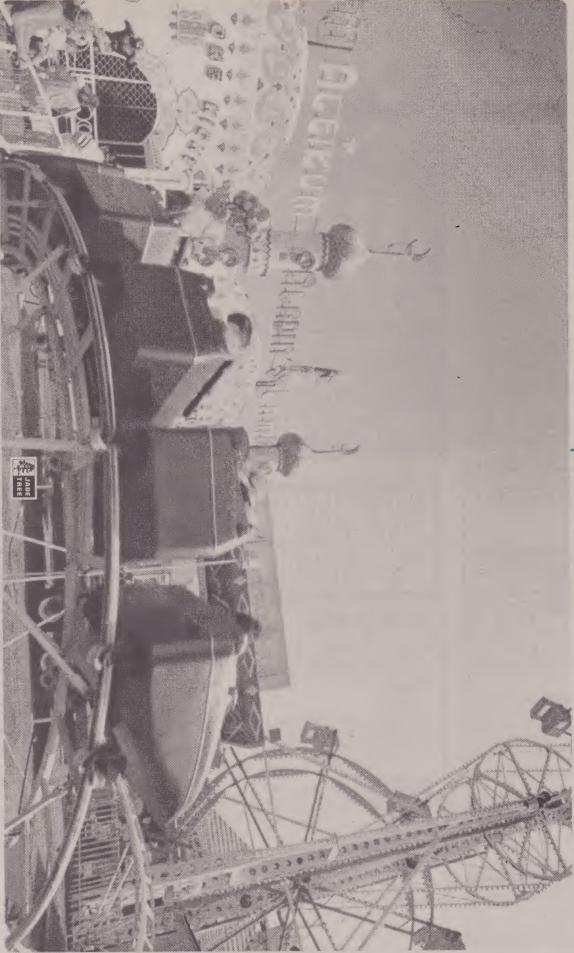
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EVERYTHING WENT BLACK ACOMPLETE ORAL HISTORY

BLACK FLAG was destined for history. Emerging in Southern California in 1977, Black Flag played punk that was louder, darker, and more desparate than the sounds blasting over from Britain, New York, and San Francisco. Where others may have sung about destruction and riots, Black Flag destroyed and rioted—so much so that they were banned from playing in their native LA. In a world of wannabe's and posures, Black Flag truly believed in the power of disciplined, stripped down, cranked up rock to change people's lives. A Black Flag show wasn't so much musical entertainment as an opportunity for both the band and the audience to exorcise any number of the ugly demons lurking inside them. Black Flag were the ringmasters of the most emotionally charged and often violent show on earth. Black Flag was hated by the authorities, who viewed the band as a potential vanguard of a sixties-style youth rebellion and tried to crush them by cancelling their shows outright or cutting them short with the help of phalanxes of baton-weilding cops. And then there was the music: brutal, distorted, and loud as hell. This was Black Flag: synonymous with violence, chaos, and anger.

Or so history tells us

But history, it is said, is written by the victors. It is one-dimensional, one-sided and always glosses over the ugly parts. Reality, filled with its inherent contradictions, grey areas, and the inevitable boring bits, is never that forgiving.



The oral history manages to straddle both worlds. It allows both the victors and the losers to speak in their own words. Those words reveal the myths, the truth, the inevitable boting bits. The reader is then allowed to make their own decisions—to write their own history—with the material they're given.

The history of Black Flag has been written many times. These histories have always fallen short—even one as seemingly uncompromising as Henry Rollins' own *Get In The Van*. The major failing of these histories is that they have always stayed true to Black Flag's larger-than-life myth of power chords and power violence.

Today. 14 years after the band's demise, Black Flag's former members seem comfortable with adding a little human depth to that myth. In late winter, David Grad had extensive talks with Greg Ginn, Chuck Dukowski, Keith Morris and Dez Cadena in Long Beack and LA. He spoke with Henry Rollins at his publicist's offce in New York, and talked with Bill Stevenson and Kira Rossler over the phone.

The picture these conversations have created is much more complicated than previous histories of the band have painted. It is a picture wrought with contradictions, animosities and long-burning fires as well as passions, loves and friendships. It is a picture that hopefully will raise as many

-Daniel Sinker

INTERVIEW BY DAVID GRAD

ALL PHOTOS REPRINTED FROM GLEN E. FRIEDMAN'S BOOK FUCK YOU HEROES WITH PERMISSION FROM BURNING FLAGS PRESS

GREG GINN

ROOTS

As a kid I thought rock was stupid—when Janis Joplin died, I didn't know who she was. I was into electronics and writing poetry.

I always laughed at that stuff. In fourth or fifth grade all the kids came in saying the Beatles were on the Ed Sullivan Show. I said, "who cares, it's just a stupid show." The next week they all came in wearing Beatle wigs, I just saw the whole thing as a soundtrack that went with a set of clothing.

I was into electronics since I was twelve and running my own business. SST stood for something I didn't end up marketing: solid state transmitters. I marketed amateur radio equipment.

ORIGINS OF BLACK FLAG

I never owned records as a kid. Then when I was eighteen, I got a record as a premium for subscribing to KPFA, a listener sponsored Pacifica station. It was David Ackles' *American Gothic*. It was a strange record—tin pan alley arrangements and a singer with large ensemble. That opened the whole world of music for me at once—jazz, country, blues, rock and classical. I listened to everything and bought second hand records. But it was about the music itself, it wasn't a social thing. I wasn't interested in getting involved with any particular scene.

I started playing guitar at around 19, when most people were putting it down and getting a real job. I never thought about being in a band, I just wrote lyrics and played when I got home from school. It was a cathartic thing—a break from studying.

NERVOUS BREAKDOWN EP

Bomp was going to put it out and then didn't and that delayed it for a year. We recorded it in January '78 and came out at the end of '78. It set the template—this is what it is. For people coming into the band there was something there and it was pure. After that, people couldn't argue with me as to what Black Flag was or wasn't.

Guitar leads didn't come into the music with early Black Flag because we didn't have a real rhythm section for about a year, so I couldn't drop out and keep a strong rhythm at the same time. That had a lot to do with the initial songs. We didn't have a problem with it being simple, and so it grew naturally.

POLICE VIOLENCE

We were in the news a lot, not the music section but the metro section. I'm always prouder of getting in the real newspaper—that's more of an accomplishment. You have done something to really screw with people, not just, "I'm a rebel in the music industry."

Generally people think the authorities are correct. If there is a riot, it's always, "What are these people doing to cause it?" My perspective is quite different. We didn't go out to cause anything, we were a rock band. We had an implicit politics. The police started the riots, then at a certain point, a riot became the thing to do.

We didn't expect to attract the police. We are Americans, we should be able to play whatever music we want. We weren't doing anything illegal, except for graffiti—and they never got us for that! There was so much of it, we were probably known to the general public from that—we were

"Get In The Van? It's all false. I don't need to read that stuff to know that it's inaccurate. He makes such a big deal out of living in a shed—it's constructed like a house, it used to be my father's study."

-Greg Ginn

It was blues based, but it wasn't regular blues—I would screw it up. I would play along with records but I didn't learn the songs, I just jammed with the rhythm section.

I learned technique by doing it. I would absorb stuff but I would never consciously study other people. Playing guitar was about having fun and writing songs. It was intensely personal.

In the seventies, you were either in a cover band or you got a hundred thousand dollar budget to do an album. You needed a stage show or a gimmick. It looked really boring. I was used to controlling my own destiny and it was never enticing to hook up a deal with a big company. I was interested in playing pretty basic music. Then I felt the atmosphere had changed and I felt there might be people who wanted to play music in a raw form.

Everybody I knew was into progressive rock . The general perception was that rock was technical and clean and [there was an attitude of] "we can't do it like we did it in the sixties." That wasn't interesting to —I wished it was more like the sixties! Then I read in the *Village Voice* what was happening at Max's and CBGB's and thought "maybe this is something that is going to open it all up again." That's when I started getting interested in having a band.

I saw a big emotional gap in punk. I thought it could be much more over the top. I saw a lack there because of its puritanical attitude in a sense. I'm more concerned with what I want to do than what I don't want to do. I think that's a different mentality. A lot of punk lacked emotional commitment and it didn't go over the top—"fuck you" was just rhetoric in an interview.

merciless. We felt that it was our only outlet. If the media is controlled, what other way was there to get information out there? It had a big impact on the visibility of the band, since we did it on real high profile freeways!

It got to where we would rent a hall and the cops would be there before the crowd. They would let it go on for a while and then they would move everybody out. If you closed down any sporting event—any event people had paid to see while it was going on—without explanation, people are going to do something. The most middle of the road person is going to smash something.

HENRY ROLLINS

His label and publishing company are all about, "How do I look if I put out this record or book." Every record, every book is by somebody "cool" who already has a record or book so he can benefit from that. That's why he won't keep it up, he'll get onto something else.

Henry become my mirror image in the eyes of a lot of people—much more than you can imagine—even with my parents. He wanted to be part of my family. Really bizarre stuff was going on.

Get In The Van? It's all false. I don't need to read that stuff to know that it's inaccurate. He makes such a big deal out of living in a shed—it's constructed like a house, it used to be my father's study.

The band reached the peak of its popularity with Dez. He was people's favorite singer and connected most with an audience. We headlined the Santa Monica Civic [4500 people] with him. We never reached that

again. When Henry saw us for the first time in New York, it was a sold out show at the Peppermint Lounge. We never reached that height in New York or LA again.

Henry was the guy who came into this cushy situation that had already been fully established. He still tries to write himself into the harder times, but by the time Henry was in the band, all the riots and the police were for the most part already in the past. He is desperate to claim this kind of past. How am I supposed to say that with out seeming egotistical—but its all phony and I don't want to dignify it. I would rather be rid of him. I see this as a continuing soap opera.

HARDCORE

Hardcore was thrash (music that doesn't have a groove and is just about playing fast) and to me Black Flag was never thrash. And where we were, it was something I wanted to nip in the bud. In Black Flag we would work up songs by starting real slow and keeping the groove as we kept practicing every day and making it faster. I don't like thrash—it's too straight, too puritanical, too white. What's the objection to making it feel good and groove?

UNICORN LAWSUIT

I never wanted to be on a major label. We had a distribution deal with Unicorn who had a deal with MCA. Unicorn ripped us off and MCA never really wanted us. The Dickies were on MCA. The Sex Pistols didn't make the charts here. We would have done worse on a major. Instead, we kept pushing on our own and created our own opportunities.

When we refused to put out records for Unicorn, they sued us and got an injunction. We couldn't put any records out in our own name so we released *Everything went Black*. It didn't say Black Flag on it. But the judge treated us like scum and still said we had violated the injunction. Chuck and I spent five days in LA county jail—which is a long time to spend there. If I had been in their six days, I would have gotten beat up because people were beginning to figure out who I was.

CHANGES IN THE BAND'S LINEUP AND STYLE

The changes in the band continually opened things up. I got more proficient, but my attitude towards music changed by just learning what a band was. I started out thinking that the main thing was how interested someone was in this type of music and if they are a fan of it, then they were a good person to play with. I got more tuned in to getting people who could make the music live up to what I thought were its possibilities. I always felt the band was improving with each change. I was never looking for someone to live up to a past member, that's why the songs stayed fresh

What really changed after *Damaged* was that Henry wrote more and was less open to what I was doing. We couldn't do songs with a sense of humor anymore. He got into the serious way-out poet thing.

We were very much at odds with any structure. It was not like we were against the government, but against this indie rock structure. History glosses over that. On My War, we tried to explore the limits of heaviness.

BLACK FLAG'S INFLUENCE

What made us so influential is that we toured so much and that so may people in the audience were in bands.

BILL STEVENSON AND KIRA ROESSLER

I liked his enthusiasm more than his drumming. I was never really comfortable with his drumming. He tapped into the work ethic. Kira wasn't afraid of work and she had a good emotional bottom end.

LAST LINEUP

Anthony was my favorite drummer. He was a good blues drummer. C'el was wild musically. Unfortunately, we didn't work on new material—it was the best line up of all.

REASONS FOR BREAKING UP THE BAND

I felt like it wasn't going to be the same anymore. I really liked what we



had done, but what was going to be the next step? I felt I was up against too much. I felt like we couldn't go out on a limb because there was too much to lose. I wanted to go off in different directions—not just satisfy fans. Henry said, "why can't we do another album like *In My Head*, Greg, just do the same thing." I saw I couldn't fight everybody and I wanted to leave when I could be proud of everything.

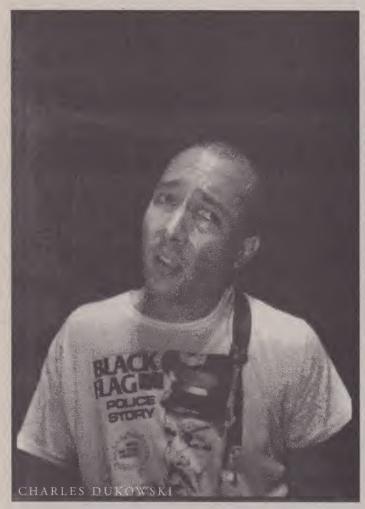
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I feel lucky that I have never had to pick up a guitar or bass and play something I didn't want to play. I never wanted to be a musician, I just wanted to play music —my own music. I'd rather work a job and play music. I like the grounding of having a job. People who play music to try to get somewhere should get a life, a job, and leave listeners alone.

KEITH MORRIS

MEETING GREG GINN

I worked in a record store and Greg came in to buy Nugent, Iggy, Black Sabbath, MC5, Black Oak Arkansas and a lot of loud, raunchy rock. Once, I remember Greg's sister gave him a gift certificate and on the bottom was written, "No Black Oak Arkansas!" Since I was into the same stuff, we started going to shows together and became friends through association.



He wanted to start a band and I wanted to play drums, but couldn't afford them. Then one day (I think it was early '77), we were in his work space and something came on the radio. All of a sudden, I leapt onto a desk, did a somersault, landed on my face and got up and started jumping around all over the furniture and he said, "I don't want you to play drums, I want you to sing." I knew nothing about singing or song writing—I'm not musically trained. We got a couple of people that I had known for a long time—scruffy beach rat types who were more interested in getting laid and finding drugs then really playing—and we started rehearsing in Greg's tiny house by the beach.

FIRST EFFORTS

In the beginning, it was very loose and crazy. We played at parties and people said we were the most horrible thing they had ever heard—which

didn't bother us because we were young and were going to do what we wanted to anyway. Our statement was that we were going to be loud and abrasive. We were going to have fun and we weren't going to be like anything you'd heard before. We might look like deadheads—at that point we had long hair, but the Ramones did too—but we meant business.

NERVOUS BREAKDOWN EP

We recorded that in a studio above a bar in two nights. There was a band playing downstairs and there was seepage. Dave Tarlin who recorded it, owned the studio—he was floored. I have a feeling he thought it was some of the worst stuff he had ever heard.

MOTIVATIONS

My father owned a rod and reel store and I was being primed to be the heir to the tackle throne of Hermosa beach and I didn't like it. I had run my course working with my dad and this was my way of saying I didn't want to do it any more. It was a major rift between my father and me

DIFFERENCES WITH THE LA PUNK SCENE

The fashion statement in LA was British—we were opposed to that. What did fashion have to do with music? We were 25 miles from LA. We were from the beach and for us it was about t-shirts and jeans.

REASONS FOR LEAVING

I was an alcoholic and a coke head. I was along for the ride. I was the guy who if a record company exec was at a show, would go and spout off to him in vulgar language. If he turned his back on me, I would urinate on his pants. If we were in public, I was the one who would clog the toilets and flood the men's room. I'm the guy who would go up to the roof and open the sky light and piss on whomever was below. I was the guy throwing bottles at the police car. I was the Tasmanian devil, the court jester. I was the dog on the chain who was let out of the cage. Gradually, there was a polarization which took place. If there were arguments, I was the one who everyone would point their finger at. If we weren't learning new songs, it was my fault. I was constantly losing arguments. I felt like the only reason I was in this band was to take orders. I wasn't kicked out, I just left. They did a show with Chavo a week later—it was like everyone knew this was bound to happen. I started the Circle Jerks a week after that.

CHUCK DUKOWSKI

JOINING BLACK FLAG

I was in a band called Wurm and I sold Greg some speaker cabs. I heard his band and I liked the spirit, the catharsis and the aggression. It embodied everything music should be. I joined six months before the first single was recorded

POLICE VIOLENCE

The last thing anyone wanted was police near any of it. But once they picked on us we spoke our minds—kids were getting hell beaten out of them. I think [the authorities] were threatened by us, once they were exposed to our ideas. The media came to us and asked what we thought. Then the police were angry at us and wanted to get revenge. It really came down to the fact that we wouldn't back down, we wouldn't give, we wouldn't say uncle.

We kept saying, "We are right, you are wrong and you're a bunch of thugs. You are beating up sixteen year old girls." They had us under surveillance for months at a time, phone taps, undercover officers all around our practice space 24-7—we had cops up the butt. Luckily, we were straight as arrows.

PLAYING THE BASS

I'm completely self taught. I came to understand some theory, but that was more of a burden. I had to throw it off because that makes you less direct and it's all about being direct

BLACK FLAG'S APPEAL

There was an aesthetic upheaval going on [in the late seventies] and in a real sense, we were one with the historical, social, and philosophical context of the day. That was not an accident, that's where we wanted to be. It was everything, if it hadn't been it didn't deserve to exist. Everything I did for those years revolved around executing that music. It was always new and therefore always right there with the moment.

TOURING IN THE EARLY DAYS

D.O.A. did a national tour before us and the Kennedys weren't too far behind. We did all the one day drives up the coast and then started leap froging—Texas, Chicago in Christmas '79, then New York in '80. We also started collecting records from other bands and they would have telephone numbers on them and we gradually we pieced together shows in out of the way places. It got easier. People copied us and then the promoters started realizing the could make money and that was it.

LAWSUIT WITH UNICORN RECORDS

They didn't pay us a penny for *Damaged*. It was a distribution deal, not a record deal so we said, "We want to move on, this isn't clean." And they started getting heavy with us. They were trying to back us into a corner. One of the partners [of Unicorn] was a guy who had been an Assistant Attorney General in the Kennedy administration and was part of a massive law firm. They sought to enjoin Black Flag from working for anybody else or even our own record company. They said we should give them this many records for this many years and the judge said, "Here is your injunction, we'll sort it out." They understood that a performing artist doesn't have time to wait and a couple of years is a long time. They let *Damaged* go out of print and the only copies were coming out of Europe.

LEAVING BLACK FLAG

For me it was over, so I left. It was such a big commitment that when suddenly you realize its wrong, it's very wrong. On every level it wasn't anything that I could pour myself into anymore. It's like love—sure she's beautiful but the magic is gone. I wasn't happy. It's not working for me and I'm outta here.

DEZ CADENA

ROOTS

My family moved to California from Newark, N.J. in 1974. My dad is Ozzie Cadena who produced jazz records for the Savoy and Prestige labels. He still books shows at the Lighthouse which is *the* West Coast jazz venue.

In 1975, high school was full of jocks, surfers and cholos. I hooked up with people who were getting into the Dolls, The Stooges, MC5, and all of a sudden we read about all these bands playing CBGB's and Max's in *Rock Scene Magazine*.

THE FIRST BLACK FLAG SHOW

They played their first real gig at the Moose Lodge in Redondo Beach with The Alley Cats and Rhino 39. Flag played at the beginning and the end. I was there as a fan and the band was powerful and chaotic. Keith made them chaotic because he liked to indulge and drink. He was belligerent, but the band was as powerful as a steam roller. Keith grabbed

BLACK FLAG CHRONOLOGY

EARLY 1977 Greg Ginn [guitar] and Keith Morris [vocals] start jamming with a rhythm section composed of "beach bums" at Ginn's house in Hermosa Beach.

MID 1977 Chuck Dukowski [bass] joins.

EARLY 1978 The band changes its name from Panic to Black Flag after they find out that the Panic moniker is already taken. The new name is suggested by Ginn's brother Ray, who under the name Raymond Pettibon designs the infamous Black Flag logo and the cover art for most of the band's records. • The *Nervous Breakdown* E.P. is recorded.

MID 1979 Keith Morris leaves and founds the Circle Jerks. He is replaced as vocalist by Chavo [Ron Reyes], former frontman of the Happy Tampons.

MARCH 1980 Chavo quits.

JUNE 1980 Dez Cadena enlisted as vocalist. At the time he was playing guitar in an early incarnation of Red Kross.

• Black Flag is kicked out of Hermosa Beach and moves to Redondo Beach.

EARLY 1981 Police harassment makes it impossible to get a gig anywhere in LA, so Black Flag starts touring around the U.S. • Six Pack and Louie Louie E.P.'s recorded.

SUMMER 1981 Henry Rollins replaces Dez as singer. • Damaged is recorded. Ginn makes a deal with Unicorn Records to distribute the record. MCA becomes interested and agrees to release Damaged under it's logo.

1982 Damaged released. After MCA hears Damaged they pull out of deal, alleging that the record is "anti-parent." • Unicorn fails to pay Black Flag for Damaged. The band attempts to get out of the deal. Unicorn sues Black Flag and a judge issues an injunction against Black Flag, barring them from releasing records on their own.

1983 The band releases Everything Went Black anonymously. As a result, Dukowski and Ginn are found in contempt of court and spend five days in jail. • Dez leaves the band and goes on to found DC3. • Dukowski leaves band goes on to found Swa. He continues to work for SST. • Bill Stevenson of the Descendents joins to becomes Black Flag's fifth drummer. • Kira Roessler becomes Dukowski's successor.

1984 Black Flag wins their court case and releases *My War* and later that year *Slip It In*.

1985 Loose Nut and In My Head are released. • Stevenson is fired. He is replaced by Anthony Martinez. • Kira is fired and is replaced by C'el. She goes on to play in Dos with (ex) husband Mike Watt.

August 1986 Ginn disbands Black Flag. He continues to create music under a variety of monikers including Burn, Hor and Mojak.

the American flag and was swinging it around and the guys at the Moose Lodge said, "You guys are out of here." But Keith had a long haired wig—because it was punk rock and we always poked fun at hippies—and played the last set in disguise.

JOINING BLACK FLAG

Chavo was in the band for six months and quit on stage at the Fleetwood. He sang two songs and said, "I've had enough of this shit, I quit!" After that, Flag went into "Louie Louie" for an hour and they invited everyone from the audience to come up and sing, they had 15 people on stage with them! It took them months to find a singer. Five months later, they were still looking for a singer and I was at the church. It was noon and Chuck was drinking coffee and beer. He said, "You know the words to all our songs, in a week we have to play Vancouver, why don't you become our singer?" I told him, "I've never sung before," and he said, "That doesn't matter, we'll try it today." This was my favorite band and these guys were my friends, so I didn't want to let them down.

HIS FIRST SHOW AS THE SINGER FOR BLACK FLAG

They had been getting flack from the city and notorious write-ups in the paper, so they decided to have one last party. The plan was to invite our whole mailing list and then move. Pretty much everyone showed up. It was getting dark, a fight broke out, windows got broken, people started pouring onto the street and carrying on. Then the police came. I'm not sure how many people got arrested, but the cops threatened Chuck

mental notes. We finished that tour and Henry was the singer for the last four gigs. I liked Henry as a singer.

REASON FOR LEAVING

I wanted my own band—the natural reasons.

HENRY ROLLINS

MIXED FEELINGS ABOUT GREG GINN

It was Greg Ginn's band. I was the fourth singer and I never felt like that much of a legitimate member. I was the frontman, that's all I ever was. Those guys wrote a lot of lyrics and I was the mouthpiece. When the photographers came, they took pictures of the singer. Interviews? I was the bazooka, so they came to me. I did what I was told and at the end of the day, I was told that what I was doing was bad. [Greg said] "This isn't your band." Nobody knew that better than me. [He said] "You're ruining this band." Why? Because I'm the only guy who won't leave? You know why there were so many members? Do you know why everybody left? Because of Greg. Did Chuck Dukowski tell you how he left the band in tears after Greg Ginn vibed him out of the band? Did Bill Stevenson tell you how he left the band in tears, crying and screaming? Did Kira tell you how many nights she came to me crying, wondering what was up with Greg? Did Greg ever tell you how many times he was too high to turn his equipment on? This is the stuff you never hear about—I kept that stuff out of the Black Flag book [Get In The Van]. There is all kinds of shit I kept out of that book that is pretty unflattering about our leadman.

"I was beating the guy with so much ferocity that the security guys were afraid to intervene. That was after four weeks on the continent being spit on by skinheads. It all came out on this guy."

-Henry Rollins

Dukowski and said if they ever saw him in town again they would put him in the hospital. So we hopped into our van and went to SF to do a show. We were already planning to move, but the way it was written up in the papers was, "Police Kick Black Flag Out Of Town."

MOST MEMORABLE SHOW

In Austria, we played a squat. They didn't have beer, but people were drinking this wine they made out of potatoes and people were also sniffing bags of glue on stage. The place was an old hanger or warehouse and it had big wooden doors with a big wooden latch like in a Frankenstein movie. All of a sudden, these two policeman come in with their two German shepherds. Everyone was zonked and people started fucking with them. Finally we saw this whole crowd converge on these two cops and they stripped off their uniforms and the punks started wearing them. The cruelest thing I saw was when they took their dogs and kicked the shit out of them. Then, they took the cops in their underwear and threw them in the snow and took that latch and locked the door.

GETTING REPLACED AS THE SINGER

We were in New York and we had some time off. I had bought a bottle and was sitting on someone's stoop on St. Mark's Place and I bumped into Chuck and Greg and they told me they'd asked Henry to be the singer. My voice was burning out—I wanted to play guitar in the band and Greg and Chuck knew it. They told me they would buy me a guitar and amp. Henry had been writing to Chuck for over a year and sent him a single of his band [S.O.A.]. They liked his voice, but he was hesitant. He didn't want to take my job and respected me, so they got me to call him. I finished the rest of the tour and he would watch me and take

I'm in awe of that guy. I think he is the man. I have never been on the stage with anybody that is that electrifying. Once in a lifetime do guys like that go across the horizon.

He would ostracize you for days at a time. He would come up to you and say, "Stop it!" I would say, "Stop what?" He would say, "You know what you're doing, stop. I'm not going to tell you again." I would say, "Oh, okay." Welcome to the world of Kafka.

In Greg's mind we were all lightweights, and that's probably true. We were all lightweights compared to Greg Ginn. Damn man, most people are! He is the acid test. Go bark your shit up against his tree and see how bad you want it. He fell asleep with a guitar in his hand. Greg Ginn band practices were like the long march to the sea. Talk about a work ethic, he is like Patton on steroids. It would make Greg mad that I wouldn't practice on Saturday and Sunday. I think maybe we were not committed enough for Greg. One of the things I noticed was that Greg gravitated towards drum machines. Humans fail him. Humans have faults. Humans have to go to the bathroom. Greg is unstoppable, he is like the terminator.

RELATIONSHIP WITH GINN'S PARENTS

Why did I live with Greg's parents? Because there was no room on the floor at our practice space. Before that, I was living in a burned out van in the parking lot. Me and [Minutemen guitarist] D. Boon were building his parents house. I got there at 5 am, worked till sundown and then went to band practice. I was working on the house so much that the Ginn's parents offered me a bedroom, but I chose to live in the tool shed and sleep in a sleeping bag. I lived in their with the snails and the spiders and the rain that came through the roof. I lived in moisture like mold.

They are very nice people—they are incredible. They pulled me into the family. They are great. After the band broke up, they begged me to stay. I still write to them. Mrs. Ginn is the coolest, she is one of those women you would do anything for. She looks at you and you can't lie. One day she asked me, "Does Greg smoke marijuana?" [I Thought], "Don't ask me these questions, I can't front on you. I'll turn into a pillar of salt." I told her—Greg was so mad about that.

DAILY LIFE IN BLACK FLAG

Here is the deal. If you were the singer in that band, you wake up every day and there's bugs crawling on you. Breakfast is whatever two-day-old food Mr. Ginn was nice enough to leave off at the hovel. Otherwise the food you are going to eat is off somebody's plate at a restaurant or food you are going to steal—and I'm not a thief. There were many days when your prospects were kind of bleak. When you walked to band practice, the cops would stop you and say, "Where are you going, faggot?" "Band practice sir." "What's in you bag, faggot?" You open it up slowly as they go for their guns. "An apple and my notebook." By then you would have

one hand on your head and another behind your back with the copbending your finger back. "You are in Black Flag, right?" "Yes sir." "You call me a motherfucker?" "No, sir." "You want to fight me?" "No, I do not."

play them except for *The First Four Years* [SST] which has all the early singles on it, and I'm not on that. I think the band should have broken up after that.

LIFE ON THE ROAD

There was the time me and Mugger [Roadie and founder of Nig Heist] went up to San Francisco and we camped out for a week, putting up flyers for the halloween show at the old Fillmore. We had no money but Mugger had all those girlfriends and he was a real street tough guy—He used to eat dog food and wonder bread! He'd roll it up in a ball and get it down real fast. His girlfriends were selling fake joints to guys and giving us the money. We would go to waitresses in restaurants and ask them if they had any old food. They were always cool. Once, we saw Jello Biafra eating in a restaurant and went in and ate all the food off his plate.

We used to book whole tours on pay phones with a bunch of phoney credit card numbers. Who had money? But still, you would find a way to make it happen.

VIOLENCE The whole vibe

The whole vibe was as Chuck [Dukowski] used to say "What the fuck? Fuck shit up." I never met guys in my life with that kind of vision and bravery.

The reason why those journal entries [from *Get In The Van*] were so intense was that every show

there was the possibility you were going to get into a fight—breaking peoples noses, knives pulled. I have cigar and cigarette burns all over me. People tried to stab me with Bic pens.

Greg never had to deal with the violence. He'll never know this, but in London in '83, a guy came on stage and was going to hit Greg in the face but he didn't notice 'cause he was down there doing his thing. I ran over, stood up like a fence post and took that shot in the face for Greg. Then I pinned the guy down, held him by the mohawk and smashed his face into the stage. I was beating the guy with so much ferocity that the security guys were afraid to intervene. That was after four weeks on the continent being spit on by skinheads. It all came out on this guy. When it was all done Greg says, "What did you do that for?" And I'm like, "Sorry Greg."

DAMAGED

I sang it, but not very well. I'm just some white guy up there yelling. It was cheap to make, but we had a lot of free studio time. We would break into the studio at night and mix for free and scam time. Spot [producer and roadie] could operate everything. I still have all the records. I don't



BLACK FLAG'S DEAL WITH UNICORN

Greg signed with Unicorn /MCA. They wanted the total coup: an unrelenting, wild record with no punches pulled, getting major distribution in 1981. If that had come off, the whole history of Black Flag would have been radically altered. Do you know how big MCA is? Fuck, they eclipse the sun! Then MCA heard the record and said, "I don't think so." All of sudden we had to sticker the record to cover the MCA logo. We had to go down to the stamping plant and sticker 25,000 album covers.

DRUGS

I did acid a few times at the behest of Chuck Dukowski. I told him I wasn't into drugs but he said, "It will help you not be such an asshole," and he was a big influence on me. If he said to jump off a roof, I would say "Which roof?" So I called up this girl, who I knew did drugs, and said, "This is Henry Rollins I want to do some LSD." Well, I didn't feel anything and three hits later, she's driving. We are at a red light and I look at this motorcycle stopped at the intersection next to us and the

wheels are still turning! I tried LSD a few times after that and then something inside me said, "This isn't something you should keep doing." It was interesting, but not great. My experience lasted six whole days. It must have been funny seeing the boy scout high.

No one smoked pot in the band for years. Drugs conflicted with our image, which was a keen the cross-hairs-won't-be-able-to-find-us sort of thing. Then in '85 and '86 Greg couldn't seem to get enough pot. He got to where he always carried an anvil case with him and he had up to half a pound in it at a time and that wasn't ever enough. He was nutty about it. That's when he went away and you couldn't talk to him anymore. In '86 [the last tour] there were no sound checks. We played the same set every night for nine months.

BILL STEVENSON

JOINING BLACK FLAG

I was this dumb kid playing drums. I lived down the street from Greg. The Descendants were a brother band, we shared practice spaces. It was kind of natural that I would fill in when they needed a drummer.

ASSESSMENT OF THE MUSIC

All the stuff before me I like and the stuff after I joined I don't like. We were expanding musically and we weren't pulling the stuff off. Black Flag doing contorted heavy metal wasn't as good as Black flag doing contorted versions of punk rock. I don't think we sounded as good slow.

VIOLENCE

I did those same tours with Henry, and I didn't see much that seemed crazy or unreasonable. The only part that seemed like something to write home about was that we had to fight a lot. To the extent you ignored it, it went away. The music drove people to that extreme and it was an evolution in the way teenagers related to their rock music—not being as passive.

We also had a very confrontational stage vibe. I'm not saying we brought it upon ourselves, it just wasn't an inviting setting. There was a wall up and we were trying to play through the audience rather than to the audience. We would put our heads down, play as hard as we could, and didn't acknowledge their existence.

DRUGS

I was a late teenager and interested in girls—we had no shortage there. I have never taken a drug in my life, so I kind of filtered that out. They seemed to be into that for a while.

EUROPEAN TOURS

A lot of the guys seemed particularly concerned about the length of our hair. Especially the skinheads. Since what I know about skinheads is that it's a fascist thing—which would mean they would not be into homosexuality—I still wonder why a boy would be so concerned about another boy's hair length.

LEAVING BLACK FLAG

We had just gotten to where it wasn't a whole lot of fun. There was a whole lot of vibing and the band proceeded to fall apart after that. There was a whole lot personality things going on, which none of us cared to sort out, so Greg just started replacing people. I think Greg wanted me to leave. Greg and I talked about it. We talked about the fact that in Black Flag, I was just the drummer and secretly I wanted more than just that, so it was kind of mutual but at the time it was difficult. I was back to playing with Milo again anyway [in the reactivated Descendants] and that worked better for me in the long run.

KIRA ROESSLER

ROOTS

I have always been a non-conformist with a need not to tow the line. I've been in L.A. bands since I was 16. The first one was Waxx, we opened for the Dils and Crime.

JOINING THE BAND

I was over at their practice space jamming with DC3 and Greg heard me and asked me to join Black Flag. My style was very different from Chuck's and that's what they were looking for. They were the coolest band I knew—my favorite—so of course I said yes.

LINEUP CHANGES

We were all hard to work with. You're in a band together and you have these huge expectations and you run each other down. I don't think anybody is a bad guy. It was still horrible when they kicked Bill out, he was very upset. Also, we had a four month tour planned and Bill was the strongest member of the band.

VIOLENCE

I think that is overblown. Every punk gig I ever went to had a potential for violence. I think it's a perspective thing. Henry is very attached to his violence, so life is more violent.

I was trying with my bass to slam [the audience] against the back wall. We were forcing the crowd to submit to our will of the band—for longer than they could stand it.

GENDER ISSUES

I can be one of the guys, but it was still kind of weird being a girl on tour. I got accused of sleeping with the whole town a couple of times. I still hear stories of what an amazing nymphomaniac I am! All I had to do was sit in the van and smoke a joint with a guy and all of a sudden I was sleeping with him.

PROBLEMS IN '85

Greg smoked a lot of pot and so did I, but I don't think that was a factor in anything. For the '85 tour, we got this young drummer who was not physically strong and we had to break him in in two weeks. Physically, he wasn't up to it, but by the time we recorded 10 1/2 I thought he sounded pretty good.

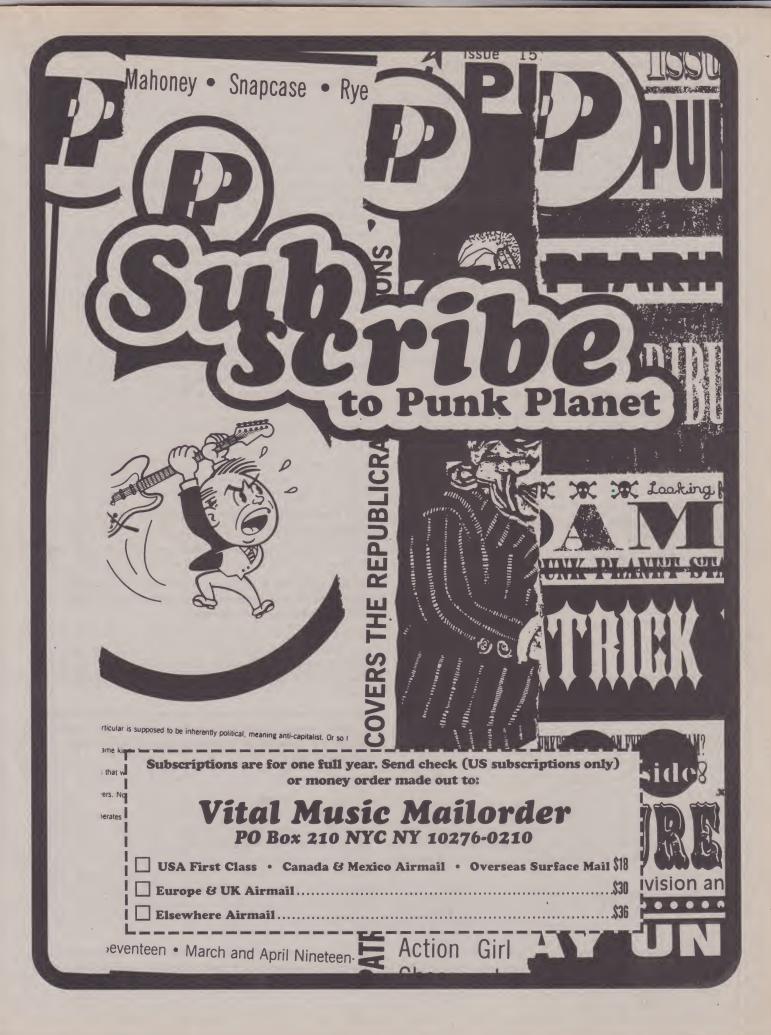
WORK ETHIC

I was going to UCLA and we still practiced five hours a day. Greg could play ten hours a day, and did many times. He jammed at sound check. He'd play with the opening band. We shared an approach on how to do things—that's why I have the logo tattooed on my arm—whatever you do, do it all the way. It was agreed that it wasn't going to be half-assed. This is what it is—less is not an option.

GETTING KICKED OUT OF THE BAND

He just didn't want to play with me anymore. I thought it was coming—there were a lot of indications and there was a lot of tension.

Anyone interested in the more technical side of Black Flag (gear, mucisionahip, etc...), should search out the article "Fade To Black" in the July '97 issue of Guitar World Magazine. It is the companion piece to this article and remains important for anyone who wants an accurate picture of what being like Black Flag felt like from the inside.



O.K., East Coast vs. West Coast. Compare and contrast.

Chris: I grew up on the west coast. Where I grew up—San Jose—there was a really bad indie scene. Sleep and Neurosis were the two bands that came from San Jose, which tells you a lot.

Araby: Well, at least you had something. Hawaii had nothing.

Chris: Well, in San Jose there was Sleep and Neurosis and hardcore, and that was basically it. So I was a hardcore kid for a while and I played in a hardcore band and hated every other kind of music, just like every other hardcore kid did. I moved to the East Coast and...

Araby: Everything was cooler.

Chris: Yeah. More variety and more of a community.

Araby: Bands are actually nice to each other here!

Chris: Everybody has this big misconception that the West Coast is great, especially San Diego. For music, San Diego right now is a big loathsome pit. Tanner broke up, Rocket From the Crypt isn't a San Diego band, they're everybody's band, Drive Like Jehu broke up—basically the scene that was flourishing is now dying out. That whole "brutality core," "scream core," Justin Pearson, Stuggle, Swing Kids, Locust thing is something that's not appealing to us.

Araby: Also it's not a scene that is friendly to other music.

Chris: They're very, very cliquish with the whole dyed black hair, black clothes, and white belt thing. They're just a circle of friends and they keep it to a circle of friends that play shows for each other. It's just a bad scene.

Araby: We're trying to get around that.

Single handedly?

Chris: No, there're a couple other bands too. There's this band Boxcar; No Knife is still playing, they're great. There're some bands from the L.A. Area: 100 Words For Snow...

Araby: I think slowly but surely it's going to start turning around. I think a lot of the kids who are into what Chris calls "brutality core" or whatever are realizing that there are other things out there. They're going to more shows, trying out different stuff.

Chris: That's how it was with me. I just had to...

Araby: You, you, you, you, you!

Chris: That's how it is with most kids, I think. They just start opening their ears a little more. All the kids that two years ago in San Diego would only listen to the cool, hip, emocore bands, now listen to a lot of older music—a lot of old David Bowie, Beatles, Stones, stuff like that. Kids are starting to realize there's a huge musical lineage that they can draw from. Kids are trying to explore a little more of a melodic approach, I guess. I think as far as community goes, the East Coast is a better place to be. I think I definitely feel a lot more at home here, even just coming out here for these last few days. We're immediately encompassed by friends—encompassed by a community of bands that we respect and enjoy.

Araby: And at shows, like the one we played last night, you look out into the audience and you can't even group anybody. There's so many different kids here. So many different people. Like you stick together us and The Rye Coalition, The Vehicle Birth, and Rosa Chantswell and there's all these different avenues...

Chris: But you still feel at home. On the West Coast, you feel segregated. Every show we play with bands of different styles, it's readily apparent that not everyone views it as just music. People feel like, "Well this band is that kind of music, so I'm not going to stick around." It's not like, "Oh it's a local band, let's go see them." No one is excited about shows at all. That's the big difference. Kids here always seem really excited to come out to shows and are really supportive. But out there, it's definitely an uphill bat-

tle. It's strange because everybody is always talking about how great the San Diego scene is, and how great the kids are. Once you win over some kids, it's great and with Joe and I living on the West Coast before, we have friends which helps a lot too. But there's definitely a lack of enthusiasm. Kids could just care less right now. I think they had Jehu, Pitchfork, and so many other great bands that they were ruined by it.

Araby: The kids got spoiled. They're burnt out.

Chris: I think that's why the whole Locust thing came up. All the music is just screaming noise, it's like anti-music. I think that gets old really quick, but I think that was just a backlash to all these great bands—they all washed out and now it all feels sterile.

PP: Well, not being from San Diego, it seems like there's this real mysticism about what people are doing there. And I think a lot of it has to do with the fashion aspect of it. Like when a friend of mine got back from visiting there, he told me how he went to some restaurant and Spanakorzo was making fun of his shirt! [Laughs]He said they were making fun of him because he wasn't wearing the right clothes.

Araby: Black button up shirt, black Jack Purcells.

PP: I thought that was awesome! Incredibly petty, but very funny to me. Like at the show you guys played last night in Boston, if some kid had shown up who was from San Diego, and the whole room just kind of turned to him coldly and was like "Yeah, nice pants." [laughs]. That would never ever happen here.

Araby: But it's true, though. That's totally how it goes down.

Chris: It's very much a fashion thing. It's weird. I don't even want to say it because it sounds so shitty. I don't know, a lot of kids I talk to about San Diego now immediately associate it with black hair, sad kids, black clothes—it's like you just want to tell everyone to cheer up you know?

PP: It seems that of all the places to go and be depressed, San Diego isn't one of them.

Chris: It's gorgeous! Gorgeous coast line, trees, there's a beautiful blue sky all the time. I don't know what these kids are sad about. [Laughs]

PP: Well, maybe it's related to the whole punk thing in the first place—a bunch of kids who have everything going for them so they have to be really pissed about nothing.

Chris: In San Diego, it may be the kids aren't really fully satisfied with their wardrobes yet, so they're all pissed off. "I don't yet look cool enough, SHIT!" Because all their friends are doing the same thing. They want to come up with something new, without coming up with something too new. [Laughs]

PP: One day somebody is going to show up to a show there wearing all white, and there will be this one glowing figure in the crowd that everybody is staring at, and everyone will run out of the club to go shopping. (Laughs)

Chris: Somebodys gotta do something. Somethings gotta happen soon. That whole clique...

Araby: It's starting to, die out. It's definitely starting to die out. It's not just attendance and fervor either, you can tell the kids just don't care anymore. Not even about their own little scene. Also the big difference between here and San Diego is that there's pretty much only one all ages place there and it's affiliated with the college, so it's not even open in the summer. Plus, they don't have a staff, it's all volunteer. It's really hard to play to the audience that we want to play to—that we need to play to. We want to play for the kids and we have plenty of friends who are pissed off at us because they've never seen us play.

PP: It seems like with that many kids who are involved enough in the scene to go shopping, you'd think there would be a handful that would bother to put on shows. But then again, you can have kids



INTERVIEW BY JOSH HOOTEN
PHOTOS BY PAUL DRAKE

JEJUNE

With all the brave pioneers of the "mature" emo boom breaking up, changing up, or moving on, one might expect a void of talented bands left behind, or perhaps a new crop of talentless knock offs trying to catch the fading light of a stellar movement. And perhaps you'd be right in a lot of cases, but not with Jejune. Not merely playing a style or mimicking a sound, Jejune bring a whole new bag of tricks to the game. Comfortably familiar, but still fresh enough to kick you in the pants, Jejune write songs that feel like old friends with which you have a lot of catching up to do. Live they are an unabashed outpouring of emotion that you can't help but get caught up in. You can stand there as still as you want with your arms crossed looking indifferent, but you can't deny the infectious enthusiasm Jejune radiate from the stage. The rules clearly state we are not allowed to dance, or sway, or react to the bands we like anymore, but damn is it hard to hold back when Jejune are playing. This interview was done with Araby and Chris on an extended lunch break on a rainy day in Boston.

putting on shows and still things can suck. The problem here is, for example, The VSS played a couple of weeks ago and it was in a part of town that has the code of silence in full affect, and ...

Araby: ... it wasn't flyered or promoted at all, right?

PP: Yep. And the kid who put it on didn't understand why nobody showed up! Well, let's see, it's a Wednesday night, there's 4 bands so it's really late, we're in a really scary place, nobody had any flyers, nobody knew where this space was because there had never been a show there before, and 4 songs into The VSS set the power went out because all the fuses blew. Any backup? Nope. So they played for 15 minutes in front of 12 people and that was all there was to it. Sometimes, even when kids are active, they fuck it up so bad they might as well not bother.

Anyways, here's a question that I've been trying to figure out how to ask so that it doesn't sound like an insult. So here it goes: your music is pretty accessible, and the climate of music right now seems right for you to get really big and I'm curious if you guys do get really big, do you have any strategies to survive it?

Chris: Sacrifice Araby. [Laughs] Put her right up front, she soaks up all the heat. She's got that smile—we'll just hide behind Araby.

Araby: That's tough. I worry about that all the time because there's no model we know of, no diagram or plan that shows you how to survive that kind of thing. So many people have done it wrong, so many people have gotten something out of it, and it all just seems like luck. It's all up in the air.

Chris: Like when somebody does it wrong, you know exactly how they did it wrong. But when somebody does it right, you never know how they did it.

Araby: We've gotten a lot of advice here and there on what to do. Like, "you guys should sign to a major and then get your van and all the money and your records and then skip out on it." Or, "you should stay with little labels that will treat you better and stick by you." Or whatever, it's hard to say. It's so up in the air. People can say we're really good or that they think things will go really well for us, but you just don't know. It's so hard to plan for that. It's hard to try and speculate on how to do it.

Chris: The only formula I can think of that makes sense, or that I can think to follow, is to first and foremost be true to ourselves about how we feel about it. If we do want to get big I don't want to lie about it and be like, "No we don't want to get big and all that." If we want to be big, I trust in the three of us that it will be for the right reasons. I know the three of us and it wouldn't be because we wanted a big swimming pool that we could drive our Ferrari's into while shooting off our AK-47's off at the neighbors and stuff [laughs]. It would be because it would allow us to get our music to more people and it would allow us to be in a comfortable position to let us focus on and concentrate on our music all the time. That's what all of us want to do. There's not a waking moment in my life where there's not a song going through my head or I'm thinking about music or worrying about it or whatever. I definitely think that we'd have to take a lot of shit, but you just have to play and play and find the people who understand and appreciate what you're doing. We write songs for us and we're not going to put something out just because we think that's what people want to hear. We write songs because that's what we want to do and we're the happiest when we're writing and playing in front of kids that like what we do. That's what I want to keep doing, just building up a following of kids who appreciate what we're doing and I think...

Araby: It doesn't matter where we end up if we keep doing that.

Chris: The music is part of us—it's not just something we do. We put a lot of ourselves into this and when somebody can look back and recognize a part of themselves, I think that's awesome.

Araby: I think also a lot of the struggle when you get to that point is about kids who you've played for and appreciated what you were doing not understanding and respecting the decisions you make. I guess you just have

to trust that if they understand the music and where you're coming from and understand that we're playing music for them as well as for ourselves, not for some big pool and a Ferrari, then they'll also understand that the decisions we make are to better our chances to continue doing that.

PP: I think things are really black and white for a lot people when it comes to bands making decisions like we're talking about. It's really easy to look at things as black or white when you're not working shitty jobs to pay your rent between tours. I just got my first real job making decent money for the first time in my life and to imagine being in a band and just having to quit to go on some three week tour, it really wouldn't be an option.

Araby: There's so much more you have to think about. When you're in a band those responsibilities don't apply. Kids get all pissed off when bands want to make even a little bit of money but we still have to pay our rent even when we're gone and that money's gotta come from somewhere.

Chris: I don't see kids getting pissed off at doctors for doing what they love to do. Most kids associate "profession" with doing something you don't want to do, but you do for money. But when I'm not on tour music is my job, I play jazz three nights a week with Joe to make money. We're doing something that's fun and we're making money. I don't see kids coming up and breaking our legs for that. Or jazz guys coming up to us saying, "You kids are having fun playing jazz and making money and that sucks, you guys are sellouts." [laughs] I just don't think it's fair to judge somebody else when you're not in that person's shoes. It's elitist. I think with us it's all a moot point until the day that we all decide that's it's a good idea to sign to some major label. Then we'll have to deal with all this, but right now we're nowhere near that. We don't have major labels looking at us. I know there's gotta be crazy rumors going around, but that's not the case. The only people who understand decisions like this are other bands. I can call up my other musician friends and talk about labels and so forth without having to watch what I say or be afraid that if I say something, it'll end up as some crazy rumor. It's just something you never ever think about when you go up to play your music. It's absurd to think about right now! I play music, Joe plays music and Araby plays music, the kids like it, we have fun doing it, it's a part of us. And I never thought I'd have to deal with all this tiny little shit.

PP: Well the part that's always been the most contradictory to me has always been that the kids require these bands to make these ultimate sacrifices for them and all they're doing in return is paying \$7 bucks to go see the band, maybe twice a year and buying a \$10 record. They're not sacrificing anything in return, but they expect this huge return. Like you can't sell records to make money while you're on tour to kids who are able to stay put and hold down a job year round.

Chris: I mean what are we even doing here? We're blowing \$1,000 to rent this van, because we blew up our other one, throwing away \$500 on that, we're obviously not going to make any money here, I shouldn't even have to say that because it sounds like I'm making excuses. It just doesn't seem like something that applies to us right now.

Araby: What Chris said about it not being relevant pretty much sums it up for us right now. We're not thinking about it. If anybody is coming up with these ideas that we're going to be the next big thing or all these things are going to start happening to us, they're coming up with it themselves because all we're thinking about right now is doing this tour, getting home for more shows and setting up another tour. This goes back to what we were doing here. I mean we could be at home in San Diego sitting on our asses saying "Fuck it, we're not going to make any money on this tour so we're not going. We're going to lose money and have to spend our own money, so fuck it." But since it's not about that for us, we'd be sitting at home pissed off because we really wanted to play these shows.

Chris: And it's easier for me because it's her credit card that paid for the van, so right on sister! [laughs]





THE BIG TAKEOVER YEAH, YEAH, YEAH

When Lumberjack started in 1994, a lot of people expected it to become another Mordam-style distributor. While Lumberjack may never have lived up to that promise, it did find a comfortable niche as a reliable distributor focusing on a select group of stores and a mailorder business that was able to pay the labels it distributed like clockwork. However, the daily grind of running a distribution business has taken its toll and three years after it started, the original owners of Lumberjack are exhausted. They needed to get out. Not wanting to leave the labels who have come to rely on them in a lurch, they put the business up for sale. They found a buyer in Doghouse Records. What prompted the sale of Lumberjack? What does the future hold? Lumberjack's Eric Astor reveals all.

Interview by Rama Mayo

Punk Planet: When you started Lumberjack, you had to have known that it wasn't going to be easy. Now, a few years down the line, you've decided to pass the torch along to someone else, leaving tons of labels that rely on you to get their records to kids with an uncertain distribution future. Why are you doing this?

Eric Astor: Our motto is, "If you don't like what you do, don't do it" and We don't like what we do. It's one of those things that we really enjoyed while we were doing it and we enjoyed getting to the point it's at now, but it got to the point were a lot of the music that we were distributing was not music that we listen to. Couple that with scene politics and the way that kids will bitch about anything you do, and not having that much in common with those kids and it just brings you down. We also want of get on with our lives. Rich and I have not made enough money to live the last three years and when you can't live comfortably and you see the potential to, then you change your mind real quick. Rich wants to go to law school. He's going to Poland to work at a human rights agency there and I have two other businesses that I am doing in addition to the label, so I'm a busy guy. We're both just not interested in doing it anymore. About 6 months ago, right after Christmas, there were some developments at Lumberjack and we decided we were going to stop doing the distribution company. We threw that out to a few people and the feedback we got was, "No, no you can't stop. You're the only distro that pays and we won't be able to get our records in stores." We also got quite a few calls from a bunch of stores that order from us on a weekly basis. So we felt obligated, since Lumberjack has a good name and track record, to maintain it and keep it going. Luckily, we found someone that has the track record and the business sense to actually get something going and that person is Dirk from Doghouse.

PP: So why should we believe that he is going to do a good job?

EA: He is going to do a very good job. A) He is putting a lot of money into it. You obviously don't want to put a lot of money into something and see it fail. B) He has been running the label for 7 years and he puts out a lot of records. If he puts that many records out—and we all know how hard it is to put out records—and he is still around, then he has to be doing something right. To be honest, I've known him for a while and he seems like a good guy and his heart is in the right place. The other candidates that wanted to take it over either did not have the capital—it costs a lot of money to run this and it costs a lot of money to set something like this up—or they just didn't understand business enough to keep it going. We're

DOGHOUSE SPEAKS

Since Dirk Hemsath, owner of Doghouse Records and proud new owner of Lumberjack Distribution, is somewhere between D.C. and Toledo in a huge Ryder truck full of records. I guess I'll have to answer the interview questions. For anyone who cares, my name is Andy Leitner. I hold the extrafancy title of "General Manager of Lumberjack Distribution, Inc." Some readers may know of my band, Omaha, which has been on a partial hiatus since our European Sub-Zero-Degrees tour with Metroschifter.

Punk Planet asked that I address two major topics. The hirst is: what's the hardest part of taking over Lumberjack? The second is: how will the operation of Lumberjack affect the operation of Doghouse Records?

The hardest part of this whole operation is staying sane. Besides just clearing out the fourth floor of an office building and filling it with desks. shelves, computers. CDs and records, we have to convert all of Lumberjack's databases to comply with our own. We're building a web site with an online catalog and online credit card ordering, and we're getting revved up for taking on exclusive distribution for ten or more labels. Until we officially open, it's basically Dirk and I doing all of this. Eric [Astorl is helping to coordinate things. It's really too much, but it's all actually coming together, and when we open for business and have several more people working here. I'm hoping to return to the real world again. My caffeine and nicotine intake has doubled in the last few weeks and I see Macintosh icons in my sleep.

Dirk will be dividing his time between Lumberjack and Doghouse, but most of the weight of Lumberjack is on my shoulders (hence the title General Manager). The whole idea of taking on distribution seems ridiculous since Lumberjack has saved Doghouse from having to screw around with distro for the last couple of years but ironically, that's one of the motivating factors in taking it over. We didn't want to see Lumberjack just go away after it's been so good to Doghouse. And we thought we could implement some major plans that Eric and Rich didn't have time to implement. The first big idea was the online ordering system for mail order. They never had time to put that together, and since we had time to work on that before the opening date, we dove right in. The second big idea was to put together the exclusive distribution deals with labels. Eric's coordinating that, and we've hired a person to work only on that here in Toledo. So, even though everybody who runs a label hates distro. Doghouse will actually benefit from Dirk's taking over Lumberjack because we'll be able to do online sales, and since Doghouse will obviously be one of the exclusive labels. Doghouse will have the benefit of our full-time exclusive label coordinator. Dawn Marshman, working on getting Doghouse releases out there. With all of that happening

Thanks.

Andy Leitner

Lumberjack General Manager and Head Janitor

all in this punk rock thing and we all try to maintain our ethics, but the people that rip off labels and rip off bands are these "do gooder" kids that try to get into the distribution business and try to change the world by selling cheap records and before they know it, after marking up their 7"s a dime and their LPs 50 cents, they have to pay their phone bill and their insurance and they realize they lost two thousand dollars in the first month they ran the company, so they fold it. Not only are they ripping off the phone company, but they are ripping off the labels who are in turn ripping off the bands. Our main objective was to find someone that could take it over who knew how to run a business and understood that you have to make enough money to pay not only the people that work for you but also to pay the labels regularly and do a good job distributing records. It's a hard job to do, but if you do it right and you make some money to take

care of yourself, then you can do it. I find some people do an awe-some label or a great distro but after a year of business they realize that they are only making a thousand dollars a year and they're like, "Fuck this, man." Why should someone have to max out credit cards and go into debt just to distribute records?

PP: Fuck that, show me the money.

EA: I think that if Dirk runs it, if he makes some money at it and is comfortable with it, he can maintain an ethical company that distributes punk rock records all over the world and it will be successful. That is my main goal with handing it over to Dirk. I think it has to be like that or it will go down the shitter.

PP: Is it going to be run the same way that it is run now?

EA: Yeah. It is going to be the same markup but it is going to be moved to Toledo, Ohio. That will be good because it will be more centralized and we will be able to pick up more stores because of that. I am going to be his right hand man for the first six months,

so there will not be any transition problems. I told him that the people you have to take care of first and foremost are the labels. With out the labels you're nothing. If you pay the labels late, you're in deep shit. If you don't pay a label, the word spreads like wildfire. He knows that, he's been around for a long time. He knows what he likes in a distributor and for the last three years Lumberjack has been his exclusive distributor and he really appreciates what we have done for him and how we run our business. That's his motivation, he wants to be exactly what we've been, but go beyond that also with internet sales and web sites and stuff like that—everything that we did not have time to do and everything that we did not have enough money to do. He is going to have more employees to actually do the work and get everything set up the way it should be.

PP: Why didn't you throw the towel in earlier?

EA: I'm not throwing in the towel. I will still be talking to Dirk all the time and I am doing the new Lumberjack Exclusive distro which will be modeled after Mordam, which is the best indie distro in the country.

PP: I think that the Lumberjack Exclusive thing is the best idea I've heard in a long time.

EA: It has been in the works forever—that's how the distro originally started and on Christmas, we decided that we wanted to start with 10 labels come September. We want to make a stronghold to protect labels we love. Distribution is the only business that is as scummy as Hollywood is. People

can sell your records and not pay

you and have a good excuse. If you take legal action against someone that owes you money you look like the bad guy. All someone has to do is send letters to *Punk Planet*, *MRR* and *HeartattaCk* and suddenly everybody that has no idea how to run a business is calling you a sell out. We want to get a coalition together of good labels and sell to good distributors and protect the labels.

PP: Punk Rock Mafia.

EA: Yeah! I'll be the Don and you'll be the first person that I knock off.

PP: What? I'm the best friend you got! ... About what you were saying before, it seem like any time you are organized in an unorganized situation like punk, you get accused of all sorts of things because people are scared of what that they don't understand.

EA:People think we are scum because we make money selling records. I made \$4,000 in three years, that's not a lot of money! People think we are this huge corporation; there are a total of three

people working here. Dirk is going to do a good job because he is going to have a fresh sense of direction. I think the distro will be 20 times better with Dirk running it.

PP: He obviously has some business sense because Doghouse is a pretty successful label.

EA: Some people are scared because of the switch, but that's probably because they don't know us that well.

PP: Will there be any down time while the switch is made?

EA: No. It looks like about a week turnaround. He has a lot more people off the bat helping him out than we have ever had, so it should be very smooth.

"Why should someone have to max out credit cards and go into debt just to distribute records?"

PP: How many records do you guys have to move?

EA: Um... Whatever \$248,000 worth of inventory is.

PP: Holy Shit! That's a lot of fucking records. Is that how much you guys usually have in inventory?

EA: It varies between \$250,000 to \$400,000. We might get rid of \$50,000 worth of inventory in a day.

PP: Do you have any regrets with passing your baby on to someone else?

EA: I have regrets, but I have other things that are making me forget about them.

PP: Like?

EA: Furnace Manufacturing, which is a CD pressing plant that takes care of all the aspects of pressing CDs. I'm also doing "Anodyne" which is a vitamin and supplement company.

The name comes from the last Uncle Tupelo record.

PP: What about the label?

EA: We are still going to be doing Art Monk Construction and are still going to be putting out our friends and bands that we love. Whether that means one record a year or ten records a year, it doesn't matter. It seems like when a label gets older and gets successful, they have to put out tons of records. To be honest, I don't even think I could find or afford 12 good bands—there's not 12 bands out there right now that are any good. The only good bands out there are real rock bands that are on major labels—it's sad to say that but that's the truth. If Built To Spill or the Cardigans were indie bands, then I would be set. We are just going to be putting out bands that we like. We don't have these big aspirations

PP: So you are not planning on having Art Monk financially take over where Lumberjack left off?

to be a huge label, we just want to be reputable by putting out good bands.

EA: I'm sure we could both name 10 or 12 labels that did really well then just fell off the face of the earth and I'm glad that our label has never been popular because I'd rather be consistently steady then be the flavor of the month

PP: I've always thought that Art Monk has a reputation for a big label.

EA: Does it? I don't know. I don't get much feedback—maybe I should read the mail a little more. I don't even know why people buy our records

and sometimes I don't know why people don't buy our records. The Seventh Story Mountain record is one of the best records we ever put out and no one seems to care about it. We sold 10,000 Lincoln/Hoover splits and we can't even sell 2000 Glendale records and that record rocks! I've always told people that if you sell the music you really like, then you won't sell a lot. That's why we started to pick up labels and bands in the first place. I don't know, if the Rolling Stones came around, I'd sign them!

PP: You have all these references and interests of older bands and commercial bands. Have you always felt this way or did you start as a punk rock kid doing a distro to change the world?

EA: No. I never wanted to change the world nor do I think I could change the world unless I became president, which I would-

n't mind doing. My favorite bands growing up
were Van Halen and Led Zeppelin and stuff
like that, so that's my reference point.
There are kids today that think
Youth Of Today started music...

PP: UGH!

EA: They don't realize that all today's music is biting off music that was put out 20 or 30 years ago. No one realizes that there was the Stooges or MC5 or Black Flag. Kids think that Spazz started grindcore but what about Infest, Discharge and Crucifix? There are all these bands now that aren't good and the singer can't sing. I don't understand why punk rock accepts mediocrity. It seems like just because it's not from the mainstream, it can be shitty. You listen to the old bands: Black Flag, X, Fear—those are great musicians and songwriters but these days people forgot that writing songs is important.

People say that it's more than music, and it is, but write a book if you can't play an instrument. Just because I got into punk doesn't make Jimi Hendrix a bad guitar player. Although Fugazi is one of the best bands around these days, they didn't start that music. You have to be influenced by influential bands. You have to go back to the roots.

PP: How many hours a week do you work?

EA: 70 to 90.

PP: \$4,000 in 3 years at 90 hours a week?... Greedy bastard!

EA: I finally got some money and was able to get my teeth fixed after a year.

PP: Did you get gold fronts?

EA: Yeah! I look just like Flavor Flav now. I look awesome. @

To be honest,
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of wanting and longing for what you can never achieve

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THE HALINTING SOUGS.

MAKOR INDIE POLITICS, AS ELLIOTT EXPLAINS,

A BAND THAT SIGNED TO A MAJOR (VIRGIN) GIVES ELLIOTT

IN ADDITION TO HIS SOLO WORK, ELLIOTT WAS ALSO

MAJOR LABEL LP, MIC CITY SONS SHORTLY BEFORE THEIR DEMISE, BEING A SOLO ARTIST ON A

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interview by Brenden Kelly

Cliot smith

WHAT ARE THE AESTHETIC DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE HEATMISER SONGS AND YOUR SOLO SONGS?

By myself I can do it how I want to. I couldn't really do that in that band I was in. There were other people in it, and that's really cool so long as the chemistry's right, but the chemistry wasn't right. Me and the other guitar player kinda took over on the last record and it broke up the band. We were tired of having every song that we wrote turn into a style that we didn't like. We're really good friends, but the musical thing just wasn't happening between us. That's what you've gotta have in a band. If you don't have that, it doesn't matter if you're friends or whatever.

WHAT'S IT LIKE BEING ON A MAJOR AND AN INDIE AT THE SAME TIME?

I make more money from my solo stuff than I ever did from the major label deal. Say you got like \$200,000 in a recording budget, you go, "Ohh, that's ridiculous, we did all our records for just a few thousand dollars, if that." I did my first solo record for \$20 on cassette. So you're like, "Wow, we're gonna make a lotta money from this," but immediately the lawyer gets like 40 grand, cause it's a 2 record deal plus options, so he gets 10% of the first two records up front. We bought our own equipment to record on, that was like \$60,000. It didn't need to be that much, but another person in the band sorta took control of that and bought a lot of stuff I didn't think we really needed. So immediately half of it's gone, and then fixing the van and crap, and by the time it got down to it, we each got like \$8,000. Which is great y'know, but I can make \$8,000 a year digging ditches. It's not very much money really.

WAS BEING ON A MAJOR ALL THE HELL INDIE ROCKERS WOULD EXPECT?

Not at all, no. They didn't fuck with us in the least. It's up to you to make it clear going into it that you're not to be fucked with—and I made that extremely clear. If you don't make that clear then you're inviting trouble. People that work at major labels are normal people just like everybody else, they're not assholes. They'll feel you out and see what the deal is with you and react accordingly. If you're like, "Make me a star," then they'll tell you what you need to do to be a star. If you say, "I'm not too sure about this 'cause I don't want to be fucked with," then they either won't sign you or they won't fuck with you.

DID VIRGIN COME AFTER YOU?

They came after us for a really long time, and we were in a situation with an indie label that was really bad because the person that ran that label couldn't get along with our friend who was being our manager. She wasn't like a real manager, but there was a little war going on and we had to get off that label, and the only way we could get off was by being bought out. The indie label threatened to sue us and all that stuff. We never signed a contract with them but they threatened to sue us anyway. We would've won the suit, but we couldn't afford to hire a trial attorney, so our options were very limited. That's the way the whole deal works y'know. It's a money deal and there's a certain amount of bad, shitty stuff that goes on because it's all about money, but when people go around saying major labels are evil, it's not really true. They're just folks like you and me that work there, they wanna put out a good record. Most of the people that work at major labels don't feel really happy that Janet Jackson is paying the bills for everyone else on the label, they wanna get a band that they can be proud of. Anybody who's ever been in a band can tell you that the indie label

scene is just as bad, and in some ways it's worse, because you're under a fucking microscope. On a major label if you're a weird band they sign because they wanna have credibility, they're just gonna let you do whatever you wanna do and they're not gonna fuck with you cuz they never expected your record to sell and they're not gonna push it, it really frees you up to do whatever you want. You can go ahead and get a check instead of doing dirty construction work. And if somebody wants to find it 20 years down the road and like it, then great. It's not such a bad deal.

BUT KILL ROCK STARS KICKS VIRGIN'S ASS?

Yeah, they're really nice and—I don't know, I see eye to eye with Slim. He knows what I'm doing, and while a whole lotta major label people might not be dicks, they just don't really get it. Slim really gets it. I really like that label.

SO WILL YOU BE SOLO FROM NOW ON OR WILL YOU FIND ANOTHER BAND?

I played all the stuff on the [solo] CD, there's nobody else on there at all. It's not that awesome, I'm not a very good drummer, but I like playing drums. I'm a firm believer in the idea that anybody can play anything, and if you feel like you can't play something it's probably 'cause you don't want to. And if you want to, you can learn it—if one person can do it, so can everybody else. That's the most important thing about punk to me, one of the only things that I could really fully internalize about punk. That idea that if so and so can do it, I can too. That's really true I think.

DID YOU GROW UP IN THE NORTHWEST?

I grew up in Dallas, Texas. I moved out and went to Portland when I was 14. Due to family problems or whatever—but we'll just let that subject blow off.

WERE YOU A PUNK ROCK KID?



Well, I thought I was a punk rocker, but it was the Dallas version. Which was totally stupid and bogus. I thought I was a punk rocker cause I had spiked hair and I wore plastic pants and there was like one guy who had a skateboard and then me and this other guy were his friends, so we thought we were punk. When I got up to Portland, the punks there just thought I was a bunch of bullshit.

How do you write your songs? Do you just get depressed and lock yourself in your closet with your guitar?

I make up most of them when I'm walking around Portland, some of them turn out depressing, some don't. I don't know, they just happen. I've stopped trying to figure it out because I like it, and I don't see the point in analyzing why. I've been writing songs since I was 14 or so. I've been playing guitar for that long.

ARE YOUR SONGS ABOUT SPECIFIC GIRL PROBLEMS OR DO YOU MAKE UP SITUATIONS SO THAT YOU DON'T HAVE TO ACTUALLY EXPOSE YOURSELF TOO MUCH?

I dunno, they're just about people. They're about people and things that people feel. I don't know what they're about half the time. Anytime anybody says how they feel, in a bar or anytime you know, pretty much everybody can usually relate to that in some way or another. So as long as you don't go around playing music that you don't like, then of course people are gonna be able to connect to it. Maybe not a lot, but some. I don't think it's anything special about me or anything, it's just that I don't play music I don't like anymore. And the way I feel apparently comes out, even though I don't have a lot of control over how. If I put my feelings on display then some people will react.

DO YOU LISTEN TO A LOT OF CURRENT BANDS OR KEEP UP WITH POP MUSIC?

No, it's very rare that I find anything put out now that I can learn anything from. There's a lot more time in the past than there is right now—there's a lot more records in the past. I don't go out of my way to buy a lot of stuff put out now, 'cause usually it's... usually I'm disappointed and I don't have really high standards. So I'm listening to stuff that was done a long time ago, 'cause I get better from listening to that and I don't get better from listening to people that are vying for attention one way or another.

HAVE YOUR PEERS IN THE NORTHWEST HAD A BIG INFLU-ENCE ON HOW YOUR MUSIC'S DEVELOPED IN THE LAST FEW YEARS?

Pete [Krebs, of Hazel, who was with Elliott on this tour) has. Hazel kind of taught me that (A) it's ok to just write a pop song, and (B), you don't have to smooth out all the rough edges. Which I already knew and I didn't wanna do, but my band constantly did. But yeah, there's lots of people playing in Porland. Like Quasi. I really like Quasi, I can learn things from them. I'm not a cannibal about it, but I mean Quasi is doing something that's really good, and just very much their own thing. They're doin' the real deal. There's lots of bands from Porland like that. My band wasn't the real deal.

ARE YOU PLANNING ON STAYING IN PORTLAND?

Nah, I'm moving to New York as soon as this tour's over.

WHAT'S IN NEW YORK?

Lots of people! I spent a little time there and I really like it. It's the kind of place where it can really beat you into the ground if you don't kinda have your shit together, but I kinda do now—surprisingly enough—and it can be a great place. There's lots of people there, and within that there's a lot of people who're doing real cool shit and they're

there 'cause they wanna do what they wanna do. It's not like San Francisco.

YOU DON'T LIKE SAN FRANCISCO?

Well, people move to San Francisco when they wanna move to New York but they don't have their shit together. It's the truth! I don't mean to dis them, it's just that San Francisco is a transient town. New York is too, but it's not in the same way. It's more like a "OK, I'm gonna do it or I'm not here," whereas San Francisco is like "I'm gonna test it out". It's like a little New York without all the things that I really like about it. And San Francisco has that west coast laid back feel to it. I like the east coast feel; people drive fast, and if you're fuckin up they honk at you because they wanna get where they're fuckin goin', you know, and that's how I feel when I'm in a car. I wanna get where I'm going and I don't wanna be in my car. People on the west coast, they don't wanna honk. It's like, they think that's unfriendly, and they go visit New York and they think people are rude, but people aren't rude there, they just wanna get their shit done. There's too many people there, there's eight million people there and you just can't have people blocking lanes-that's not so bad. That's not rude, it's just when you get up to the front of the line you need to know what kind of bagel you want. Because you've been standin' there for 5 fuckin' minutes-why don't you know? It's like c'mon, what do you want-do what you want. That's what New York is about.

That's why I like it.







CITIZEN FISH

Despite a five-year stint as the singer/songwriter for one of the most influential punk bands of all time, Dick Lucas is known for not being particularly interested in talking about the Subhumans. At gigs, the inevitable shouted requests for "Mickey Mouse is Dead" or "Straightline Thinking" are met with a quick retort. This, Dick explains, is 1997. The Subhumans last played a show in 1985. Deal with it. And with that, the band explodes into a song like "Sink or Swim," a powder keg of a punk-ska track from *Wider Than a Postcard*.

The band is Citizen Fish. With a penchant for intertwining ska, reggae, and dub sounds with a punk tempo, Citizen Fish were busy pioneering their form of punk fusion well before MTV woke up to the fact that this kind of music existed and focused their commercial energies on the antics of bands like No Doubt.

Since 1989, Citizen Fish have released a succession of albums which defy conventional wisdom about what tends to happen to a band's sound after their first couple of albums. In order of release, Free Souls in a Trapped Environment, Wider Than a Postcard, Live Fish, Flinch, Millennia Madness, Thirst, and the new Psychological Background Report, have all been brilliant recordings issued on the long-standing indie label, Bluurg Records, and most recently, Lookout! in the US.

Citizen Fish makes a point of touring as much as possible in the United States, owing to appreciative and devoted fans that tend to pack their shows. This interview was conducted on the last day of their most recent U.S. tour, outside of Gilman Street, that venerable punk-run collective in Berkeley, California.

BY SILIA J.A. TALVI

PP: I'm going to start out with a question that doesn't have anything to do with your music, but has to do with the recent [British] elections and what you think of the election of the Labor Prime Minister.

DICK: It was bound to happen, although everyone thought it was bound to happen last election, and the one before it, when it didn't happen much to everyone's amazement and disillusion. In order to make it happen, Tony Blair made himself look young, drank champagne, made sure he always had a suit and a smile of his face. Soon after that, he dropped the smile a bit-I think people told him that he looked a bit geeky or insincere, so he put a li'l' scowl on. He changed the party socialist properties of the Labor Party's manifesto up to that point in order to make himself more or less a male Thatcherite. He disassociated the Labor Party from the unions, which has always been a backbone of the Labor Party. He didn't make any promises to re-nationalize the privatized industry, such as water and ...

JASPER: Rail.

DICK: Rail, yes.

JASPER: He began to appeal to middle England which was what he needed to win the vote.

DICK: The hardcore Tory point. Yes, it seems he won them over as well. But, one can only wonder now what is going to happen. It is a definite good thing that the Tories are out, because if they stayed in, the abuses of power would have become even more frivolous. Because if a public can still vote for a party that has so publicly messed things up, that if they got voted in again this time, they could have done absolutely anything, or absolutely nothing, which is more likely in terms of positive social planning or anything ... As it is, I imagine everyone's going to think more positively about pop-politics for at least the next year. The Labor Party will blame the Tories for the the next year. The Labor Farty from the ing able to do anything sentence. It's illegal to be heading towards an outdoor about it. They probably will raise taxes—they'll have to if they gathering that hasn't been sanctioned by the local want to like get the country back on its feet, so to speak. I want to like get the country back of the around an think the same old political machinery will still grind on, withgo back and you don't you can then be arrested. It's think the same old political indefinition, which is a scenes well legal to hold an outdoor gathering that hasn't been corporate interests settin' the agendas behind the scenes. Wellegal to hold an outdoor gathering that hasn't been shall just have to see.

PP: What do you think about the comparisons to Clinton and the suggestion that the countries are heading in the same direction, and that there's not too much to distinguish the two main political parties in either country

MOST GOOD IDEAS COME FROM INDIVIDUALS, AND IN ORDER NOT TO BE LED, YOU HAVE TO BE AN INDIVIDUAL TO A CERTAIN POINT

anymore?

DICK: That's now become a very real comparison, yeah. Because Thatcher supports Blair's attitude and Blair once said he supports Thatcher's attitude. It is more or less a two-party system. There's a sort of charade of having the third party, the Liberal Democrats. They get about 11-15% of the vote.

PP: Although it should be said that at least you do have a third party...

DICK: We do. Oh, yeah, several. There's a Green Party, the Monster Raving Loony Party.

JASPER: The Monster Raving Loony Party, I think they wanted to abolish January and February.

PP: In all seriousness?

JASPER: Yeah, to make it a warmer year! And also to move England 600 miles to the South towards the Mediterranean. [Everyone laughs]. Very good policies.

PP: I hadn't even heard of that! Tell me a little bit about what's happening with the Criminal Justice Act, specifically activism around it, and your thoughts on it. A lot of readers may not know what the Act is, so if you want to do a quick synopsis of it...

DICK: A quick synopsis...

PP: I know it's a very far-reaching law.

DICK: In terms of how it affects us in terms of music and that sort of free and open lifestyle, that sort of thing... it's now illegal to even be... let me try to get this in one council, or the law. If they tell you to turn around and sanctioned by the law, and therefore you can't have it on any privately-owned land or common-land.

BEFORE THAT POINT, YOU HAVE TO LINK UP WITH NOW, BEYOND THAT OTHER INDIVIDUALS IN ORDER CERTAIN POINT, YOU JUST TO GET SOME SORT OF END UP BEING LONELY UNIFIED GROUP MENTALITY.

AND RUNNING UP WALLS been arrests and so forth?

JASPER: The famous phrase is specifically against modern dance music. It's actually sound equipment, so anyone who's got as "music with repetitive beats."

PP: It does, really? So they're targeting outdoor raves, then?

DICK: The massive raves of '92 & '93 were huge. 50,000 people gathered for a very nacle. The previous comparison to that would have been, say, Stonehenge in like '84, where there was 30,000 people gathered 'round the fields in and around Stonehenge. That's what they want to stomp a court injunction against the squatters. down on, that sort of public free will thing. And nowadays any festival is a sanctioned thing, you've got to pay to get in, and it lasts for one weekend at the most, and people think that's freedom. It shows how diminished freedom can become and still be called a free assembly, it's not at all.

JASPER: And then there's been like a big growth of urban festivals. In order to take the place of...

DICK: Nice li'l' phrase, isn't it, "urban festival?" It means a contained event, basically.

JASPER: I'm glad that they do still have them because it's a way for people to still meet. Either to get wrecked, get drunk, or converse, swap ideas, meet new people. Because for example, you have a sort of anarchistic festival in Edinburgh, in London, in Nottingham, I mean, that's great that those things still happen. Brighton has a sort of an outdoor festival as well. London, Tetford, but they are happening because of the illegality of a free-form outdoor festival. It's like sort of days gone by, they don't really happen anymore.

JASPER: Well the thing is, they can confiscate in the statute book of laws. It describes it£20,000 of sound equipment probably won't risk of it.

DICK: There have been arrests. There have been a whole lot more cautions and people held over night to stop these things from happening. Because these things happen when there's a massive amount of people long weekend, and that was sort of the pin-that can't be controlled because there's just too many people, they do a prevention. They block the roads, search vehicles. The Criminal Justice Act has also made it legal for owners of squatted property to apply for Within 24 hours the police can then evict the squatters. That's speeded up the process of eviction to a point where squatting has become highly risky. It was always quite chaotic before, but in certain areas of London it was quite together. So quite a few squats have been emptied.

> JASPER: The overall picture is now one of homelessness and no one's interested in knowing how many empty properties there are compared to how many people might want to live in them. It's sort of, "squatting is bad."

DICK: It's avoiding the issue by blaming squatters for the people being homeless or something. It's warped logic to the person who doesn't read very in-depth into what squatting is all about. These aren't just crusties with dogs on strings, who are squatting. These are like families, who haven't got gone away by about '79 or '80. People any jobs or income anymore. They can't afford the mortgage, they lose the house. They need somewhere to live. There's an empty property over there, it would take a couple of hundred quid to fix the water and And it gave people a sort of more realistic stuff like that.

PP: There are parallel situations happening here. What about activism around it? Have you become involved in any groups or anything like that? As musicians, have there been ad-hoc groups that have formed around it?

DICK: We're not really actively involved in much more than this band, it takes up 99% of the time. We do occasional benefit gigs for causes, as you might call it.

PP: I'm also interested in your long term perspectives of how your audiences have changed. This question will especially apply to you, Dick [and Trotsky], in terms of Subhumans, Culture Shock, Citizen Fish, and 181 that whole legacy of bands. How have your audiences changed, and how have your perspectives changed over the years?

DICK: I've spent my whole life living sort of day-to-day. Getting a long term perspective together is always quite a radical shift. [Pause] Well, hell. Right about the early 80s, I guess the anarcho-punk thing felt as strong on a personal level as the whole Sex Pistols initial burst felt stronger on a massive public national level because there were so many anarcho-punk fanzines and bands and anarchy centers. You could do a five-gig tour of London, you know? And get people going to all the gigs! The enthusiasm was rife. People would buy a record because it was on a certain label, or because of the cover of the album, or that things were cheap, and deliberately so. I mean, it was accessible.

The media/fashion interest had long were saying "Punk Is Dead" and then Crass came along and made it sort of more personal and interesting and relevant, intellectual even: They made it all make sense. grip on it. It wasn't a fashionable grip, it wasn't like, "Buy the papers and see what's going on with all these names of people

NOW IF YOU HAVE TOO MUCH GROUP MENTALITY THEN THE INDIVIDUAL GOES OUT THE WINDOW.

you're never going to meet and if you did meet them what would you say to them? I don't know." It was all sort of about, "You can do this too." The system really isn't just the opposite of anarchy, it is actually formed of all these politicians and backed by media people and conglomerates and the police force, army, and there's subversion, and there's pacifism, and all the angles were being explained. And you could catch up with that all or leave it as you like. But it definitely got more personal when it fired a hell of a lot of people up on a much more dramatically serious level.

These days, with this reconstruction of the fashionable angle [of punk] by the media and the majors, it's all a bit confusing. It's a bit sad to see it all happen. It's interesting to see these young kids getting back into it... getting into it for the first time...

PP: Not even getting back into it...

DICK: Not getting back into it at all, right. But again, it's something that's been going on for a long time. They're giving the glossy image again, and that's come out. Now at least they've got a chance to explore a bit deeper to back ten, fifteen, twenty years and find out the whole history angle to it. Where bands were coming from, or are coming from, and bands that aren't on majors. It would be a terrible slip-up if having gone through the last fifteen years, that all the 30something punks refused to get up and tell these young kids that there is more to punk rock than MTV appearances by Green Day or whoever. It would be a shame if these kids didn't get to find out about it and subvert the very thing that got them into it in the first place.

In terms of audiences, I guess there's less reliance on what you have to look like, you know—the studs and spikes and leathers. Vegetarianism got rid of a lot of leather jackets, it got rid of mine. There's a lot more fusion of music...

PP: This is an interesting point, and it sort of segues into something I was going to ask you about, regarding your own fusion...

DICK: Metal's gotten fused with it. Hip-hop's gotten fused with it in some areas.

PP: And is this a good thing, in your opinion?

DICK AND JASPER: Oh, yeah!

JASPER: It's led to really good music, not having a musical straightjacket.

DICK: And of course ska gets influenced and mixed-up with it, and reggae too. No Means No probably has some jazz in their backreggae too. No Means No probably has sented it, and they're briling to the womb. [Everyone laughs]. liant. They're the sort of best unknown band ever.

PP: What about your own tendency to fuse your music with ska and reggae? Where does that come from? I'm curious if there's any kind of spiritual angle to it for you, or if that's totally irrelevant. Ska's always meant something to you, obviously. Even, for instance, in the Subhumans, ska was there to a degree.

JASPER: I've heard Dick say something quite simple on it: "Ska is a good turn-on beat".

DICK: Oh yeah, you can take a medium-paced punk song and change it from being on-beat to off-beat. you might end up with a really good medium-paced ska song. It's got a lot to do with the beat, the drums. The actual influence came from Two-Tone. You know, Two-Tone was very close in the background to punk...

PP: The Selecter, The Specials, etc.

DICK: Yeah, early 80s. And it was political, well, the best of it was.

JASPER: I've read articles of intellectualized roots reggae being sort of anti-system rebellion and then punk being the same angle, but just sounding differently. I know all that, but really one of the more... there's another angle as well it's just things that turn you on. I mean like drum and bass, I think personally the best ones are with three notes, super low bass that is definitely coming from reggae, really, but has gone exciting. It's a sort of rewritten reggae, in a way.

DICK: I think it's a spiritual thing, partly, it has to be. because reggae and ska are something you have to get used to for not being punk. I mean, part of punk when it started was everyone started laying down these rules quickly of what was and wasn't punk. You know, who was that guy in The Clash that isn't Joe Strummer?

JASPER: Paul Simmons.

DICK: Paul Simmons. Well, he stuck his hair up, I swear he was the first person to do it. Stuck his hair up, put his face all over the place, everyone started sticking their hair up. Someone else reckoned that was psychologically because stuck-up hair looked like babies. It all had to do with like return-

Punk 999 Planet

PP: Can I just switch gears all together and ask you about something that is more political nature? What do you think about the state of the Left today? I think this question is particularly directed to you [Dick]. Why do you think the Left has become so fragmented, and why is there so much infighting? You talk about that in "Dividing Lines." There's certainly a disunity here in the United States, and from what I understand, things are also that way in Britain. If that's too broad, you don't have to touch it...

DICK: It's pretty broad...

PP: You can be specific, for instance, about "Dividing Lines," and what you're talking about there in that song.

DICK: I guess it's about the clash of individualism and the idealist form of unity. Whereas, most good ideas come from individuals, and in order not to be led, you have to be an individual to a certain point. Now, beyond that certain point, you just end up being lonely and running up walls. Before that point, you have to link up with other individuals in order to get some sort of unified group mentality. Now if you have too much group mentality then the individual goes out the window. So there's a very fine line. And can any of it work? Perhaps that's why all leftist, revolutionary radical groups tend to end up splintering into other little tiny groups because they can't agree enough, or they agree too much.

PP: Last question... what's your latest project and the name of the new CD? How can people get it?

DICK: Psychological Background Report. It's self-financed.

JASPER: Dick put the money up.

DICK: And Trotsky.

JASPER: Oh, yeah?

DICK: You put five quid up.

JASPER: I put five pounds up. [Laughter]

PP: And how can people get it?

DICK: They can get it from Bluurg USA. [PO Box 3297, Oakland, CA 94609]. For about \$9.00 postpaid.

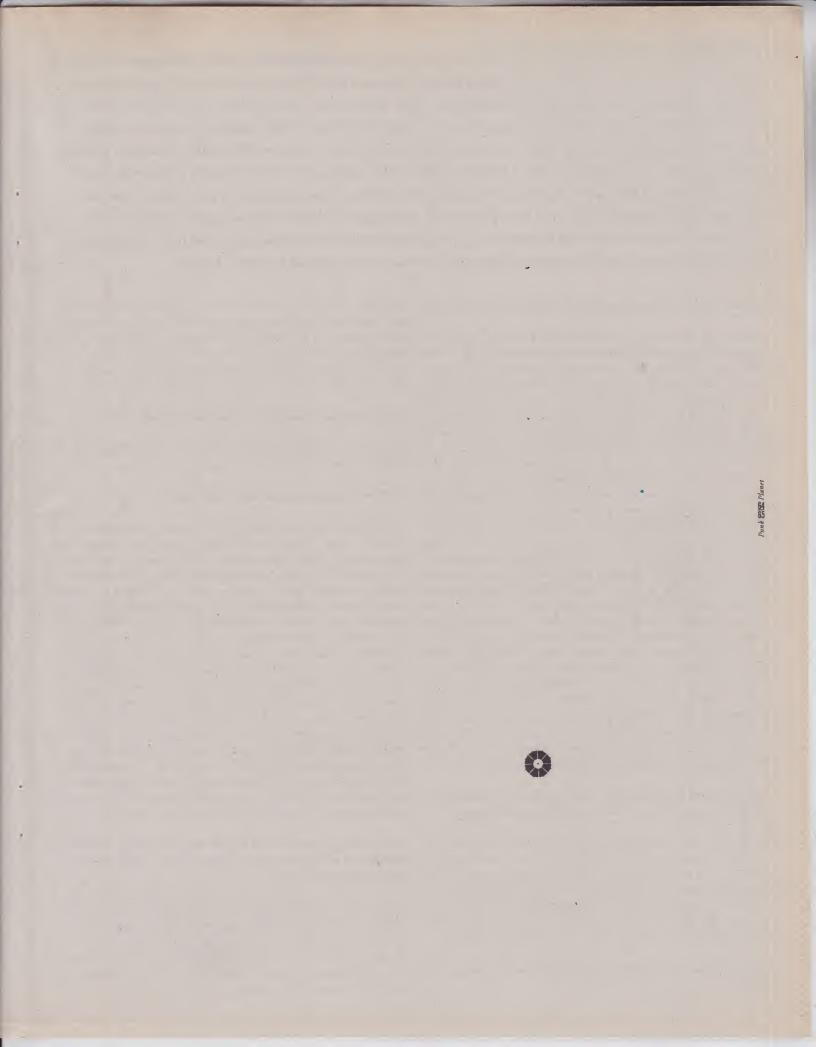
JASPER: They're also available from Bluurg UK. [2 Victoria Terrace, Melksham, Wiltshire, SN12_6NA, England]. They're not really in any stores ... we're just selling them out of a cardboard box.

Output

Description:

SO THERE'S A VERY FINE LINE.

MY WHOLE WAY OF DOING DISTRIBUTION HAS BEEN TO ALMOST BE LIKE WE ARE NOT THERE... OUR JOB IS TO GET THE SALES TOGETHER. LET THE LABEL AND THE ARTIST HAVE THE PRESENCE.



MORDAM RECORDS is probably one of the most important behind the scenes players in the history of punk rock. Founded 14 years ago, Mordam has been distributing some of the most successful and best known labels in Punk Rock. Records released by labels like Lookout!, Kill Rock Stars, Dr. Strange, Gravity and many others arrive in punk stores (and chain stores) near you via Mordam's huge warehouse in San Francisco. In fact, a strong argument could be made that these labels are successful because of Mordam. For anyone that has ever run their own record label or done a fanzine, you know that distribution is the worst part of the work. Why? Because it's almost impossible to get paid. Mordam isn't a distributor like that. Mordam pays—every time, on time. This allows the labels and zines they distribute to concentrate on what's really important: putting out the best shit out there. It seems that Mordam's success can be attributed to common sense and hard work. But are there hidden secrets? Mordam's founder Ruth Schwartz reveals all! Interview by Darren Walters

PP: How long have you been doing Mordam and what prompted you to start?

Ruth: I've been doing Mordam records for fourteen years. I had first gotten the idea for it about fifteen years ago when I was a buyer at Rough Trade. This was during the early eighties and in those days most independent distributors were busy capitalizing themselves because there was big business in imports. Because they were spending time capitalizing their own repertoire, they were not paying their vendors and everybody was getting screwed over. When I finally left Rough Trade, I had the idea for Mordam Records. That idea was based on something like "strength in numbers" so that the distributors would be less inclined to not pay their bills. So what I did was talk to all my friends and I told them that I thought that getting together and selling labels together would be one of the ways for the labels to have a little bit more power and collect their money, especially the small labels and labels who were owned by artists. At the time my friends were Tim Yohannan [Maximum Rock N Roll] and Jello Biafra [Alternative Tentacles]. They were the two that I was working on the hardest. The third label I brought in was Social Unrest's label, Libertine. Both Social Unrest and Maximum Rock N Roll were being distributed by Rough Trade at the time. Anyway, Alternative Tentacles had just lost their shirt to Faulty Records. To add to Alternative Tentacles problems, Biafra didn't realize that his manager, who was doing his mail order, was ripping him off. After Biafra found out this was happening, Microwave, who was the roadie for the Dead Kennedy's at the time, decided to go on down to Southern California and deal with it. He picked up everything from their manager and then went over to Faulty's old pressing plant and just got in there and got everything that had an Alternative Tentacles logo on it and brought it back up to San Francisco. Then Biafra called me up to tell me he's decided that it's time to go through with my idea. So we sat in a storage shed and sorted through these stacks of records; this warped record and that one-Dead Kennedys, TSOL, the Let Them Eat Jellybeans compilation—all that old crazy stuff. Everyone that we found that was in good condition, I sold!

PP: So you were just talking about doing it and then once somebody had enough of a reason to try your idea you actually started Mordam?

Ruth: Yeah. I went into business the day after Biafra called me up and said, "Let's do it." I was genuinely in the right place at the right time. From there, I got all set up. I got myself an invoice book and a telephone and got on the phone and called all of the distributors that I knew—because I knew them all—and sold them Dead Kennedy's and TSOL records. Then all of the sudden Tim figured it out and said, "OK, I'll do it too!", and within the next month I had Maximum Rock N Roll and that made me a regular item.

PP: Then it wasn't hard to get people to deal with you when you were just starting?

Ruth: No. See the thing is, I had Alternative Tentacles and Maximum Rock N Roll. There wasn't any trouble getting people interested in what I was doing with that stuff! So in giving advice to all of the other people who have tried or are trying this kind of thing. I'll tell them that they need an anchor. That's exactly what they need. Just something to keep people interested and that sells, that's what makes it work.

PP: So then others have tried to do Mordam type distribution?

Ruth: Oh yeah, dozens of people have tried it. I've even helped some of the people who have tried to do the same thing.

PP: Then it's not just about duplicating the idea?

Ruth: The idea should be duplicated! As I said, the idea is strength in numbers. There's been a lot of water under that bridge in the last fifteen years and the business has gone around and come around a couple of times, but the basic idea is still the same and it's still a good one to follow. Usually, nobody has been as successful as Mordam has for two reasons. One, they either don't have something strong enough to be an anchor, or they do it as an individual label. If you go out their as an individual record label and sell your stuff, you're at the mercy of the people that you sell to and you're at the mercy of the strength of your releases because that's how this business works. If you have something that somebody wants to come back and get more of, or the next thing they want more of, then you will get paid and people will buy from you and people will treat you right. For instance, with Mordam there are a ton of bands that nobody knows, and probably a whole bunch of bands that people could give a shit about, but because of the strength of some of the other releases, Mordam has made it possible for all of them. Secondly, it's organizational skills. Some people who tried to do this just simply didn't think you needed to be organized to go about the distribution process. Or they thought it was easy and that they didn't have to work hard. Well, this is the wrong business to be in if you want to take it easy because there's a lot of hard work involved in something of this nature.

PP: Fourteen years later, how do you feel about how Mordam is currently working? Is it still true to the same ideals as when it started and are you content with where it is now?

Ruth: In some ways it's exactly the same as when it started. It's still a group of labels buying and selling. My responsibilities have grown a lot but it's basically the same as it always was. In addition, there are more labels with Mordam and more people working for me, but that doesn't change the fundamentals of the business. What is no longer true, and if there is anything that I wish could be the same and cannot be the same, is that it is not a happy family anymore. And that means that

I feel a little soulless right now. I feel like sometimes I don't know where my soul is in there. So I hope that we can find a direction and a focus again because while the heart of the matter is not there at times, the business of selling records still is.

PP: Do you feel that in general labels today are a little more capitalist in spirit like, "We're going to get rich selling records," as opposed to just doing it for the fun?

Ruth: Some yes, some no. If you had to compare all of the labels that we work with; yeah, some feel that way and some have always felt that way. Others have always been fiercely against that and it's cut into their personality to be like that. So I still feel that there's a fabulous mix of labels between what is viewed as being capitalistic and a hobby at Mordam. But let's not use the word capitalistic when talking about this, let's use the word business instead. Because whether you are doing a for profit hobby or a for profit business, they're both capitalistic. You'll hear people say that you are not supposed to make money doing a punk rock record label. But when you start talking about this thing where everybody is arguing about what's capitalistic and what's not, it's not about whether you are making money, but whether you believe that you should make money doing something you love. So to further qualify that difference between what's a business and what's a hobby is to make it clear that there are a lot of people, myself included, who want nothing more than to be able to make a living doing what they love. And I totally support that—ether it's punk rock or painting pictures! To me, half the people I work with are like that and they don't want to be millionaires, they just want to make a living—they just don't want to have to work at McDonalds. Some of them might become millionaires, but not by design. I like supporting those people as much as I like supporting people who are plumbers and like doing their labels as a hobby. I like both of those people and I support those people and I don't have any problem with any of those things. See the point I'm making and why I don't want to use the word capitalistic? Yes, lots of people are capitalistic, they want to quit their day jobs and I want to help them do that. I got to quit my day job and now I have the hardest day job I've ever had!

There was an explosion of exposure for the punk scene about two years ago, are the majors still interested in punk music?

Ruth: No. There are no A&R people at major labels looking for punk bands anymore. It's over.

Inside the Warehouse

There's more to Mordam than just Ruth Schwartz. In order to get a feel for what some of the other people involved in the day-to-day operations at Mordam think, I sat down and had a talk with a few of them. Interview by Rama Mayo

K: Ken - Sales to domestic stores in the U.S. and sales to Australia, New Zealand, Japan and the rest of Asia. • A: Aaron - warehouse manager. • M: Michelle - store sales. • KA: Katie - accounting.

Punk Planet: All right, first things lirst, how does a label get picked up by Mordam? To an outsider, it seems to be a secret club or something.

Michelle: Basically, a label sends us something and Kathy, one of the sales people logs it in and it goes into a box and everybody is responsible to come in and look in the box as often as possible to see if anything there catches their eye. If there is a label in there that someone really likes, it is their responsibility to bring it to the monthly meeting and say, "O.K., this is something that I really like, we need to talk about it." Then it goes an the agenda for the following month and that gives everybody here a month to listen to the recards and talk about the label and be ready to come to the meeting a month later and discuss it. At that point in time, we go over the pros and cons and why Mordam should carry it and the initial person who brought it up is supposed to give a presentation and we take a vote. It's a two-thirds majority vote.

Ken: And we have such a wide variety of musical interests at work here—all the way from Glam 80s metal to acoustic folk to Swedish Hardcare to Techno.

PP: So it has to be really awesome to get in.

Aaron: Yeah, it has to be intriguing in some way. In a sense, we pick up labels—we don't do one offs put out by bands. We usually wait to see what the theory behind the label is so there is a consistency behind the body of releases so we know that the label has not put out one amazing album and the rest are horrible.

PP: So haw many people work here—what would a 2/3 vote be?

Katie: We're at 21 right now, soon to be 20 and we have had up to 23 at one point. We always look for about 5 to 10 releases at first. I'm trying to think, has there been any labels that we picked up with less than that? Another real important part of the label is the people behind the label and what they're like and what we know about them and their business dealings, and are they people that we feel comfortable doing business with because that's deliantly really important to us. But there are certain markets that we just don't do well in. Like it would be really cool to do a country label because a lot of people like country but you know, who are we going to sell the records to? It's just not our market.

PP: Totally, you have this set pattern of how to sell punk rock records so...

KA: Or just the customers that we sell to...

K: We do get feedback from distributors and stores that we sell to

and a lot of times what they're looking for is what would compliment our catalog for them. That's not an overriding deciding factor, but it's something that we keep in the back of our head because a lot of times stores are like, "Oh gosh, it's been so hard to get that stuff and now I can get it from you and that's great!"

Buffle absolute most important point is that it just has to be the coolest thing ever. Irregardless of sales, irregardless of if every distributor in the world wants it, if everyone here is really into doing it and working with these people for the next five or ten years, it must be done. It's different now that Mordam has picked up labels outside this area because we used to be really centered in the San Francisco Bay Area but now we have a label in Australia, Canada, and some on the East Coast as well

K: We've added an enormous amount of labels over the last six months.

PP: How many labels and zines are you up to now?

M: After picking some up and letting some go, we have about thirty.

PP: What's the deal with the packaging and pressing with the labels? Is it done through Mordam?

KA: We receive the records ready to sell. If they're not ready to sell, somebody from the label comes here and makes them ready to sell. We don't stuff inserts or anything like that.

K: We have no P&D deals with any of the labels.

M: As Ruth puts it, "We are the selling branch of the labels that we represent." They take care of all the promotion, all the advertising, band tours, everything. All we do is sell the records.

KA: The way the money thing works with the labels is they decide on a price for the record, a distributor price—and we have four different price levels that we sell to our different distributors, chain stores and regular stores—and we take 15% of their total sales for the month, that's our payment. We pay them 90 days after that month, allowing us to collect the money that is owed to the labels. The labels get paid on the same day every month. I've worked here over three years, and we have never paid anybody late.

K: One of the convenient things about Mordom is as much as the sales thing, we also do the collections. When I'm doing my label, Prank, I'm still owed money from records I sold to old distributors before I was with Mordom and...

M: Can Ruth put them on stop 'till they µay you? 'Cause that's one thing we have done. We will pick up a label and they are awad money by someone that we deal with, and we just tell them we are not selling to them until they pay the old debts.

K. One of the beautiful things with that is if I put out a record that doesn't sell that great and a big distributor does

I mean, there have been layoffs because of it. It's not making money for them anymore. A lot of the bands are being dropped from the rosters and people are going out of business. So the majors are not out there shopping for punk bands anymore. It's not happening. And even some of the ones who did get big, like Green Day, are selling less. So the bands either disband, or they come back down to the independent level and are going to be selling fewer records because there is less of an audience. The point being that three years ago the bands who were on the upshot are going to be coming back where they were and not where they think they should be. But this also has to do with the fact that once again there is a glut of bands. All these major labels came and gobbled up all these bands and all these people went out and became bands because they wanted to make a lot of money, so you have a surplus of bands and a lot of crap. And the consumer doesn't want to take a chance on this type of music because two years before, there was all this lousy music being pumped out and they can't tell the difference between what's good and bad until they get home and listen to it. So even if a new band comes out that may be god's gift to music, people are not going to give them a chance because they have no way of knowing that it isn't crap. That translates down to the sale of records. The whole median amount of sales drops down for a while until there is a weeding out process that takes place and all of the bands that are really only there to make money disappear. This is not the first time that it has been this way, this is a normal part of the cycle. When you come out of a really hot period, yeah people are tired of this music, but it's not a really big deal. It was the same way a few years ago. There was a big sales swell and a big interest in this kind of music. And now we come back down to the point where it's a normal level of interest in this kind of music and we have to get readjusted to having the sales that we had before that little blip on the screen. But this has a lot of retailers really scared because they got stuck with huge amounts of records that nobody

PP: Did the increase of popularity in the music Mordam distributes force you down any avenues that you didn't want to go?

Ruth: Not necessarily. We peddled as fast as we could to keep up with the demand. I mean, we just sold records as fast as we could and I feel like that's we what should have done. I think Mordam rose to the occasion. We were capable of selling a lot of records and we did the best job possible. We were just selling records, same as always, and the only difference was that now all these bigger companies were interested in buying from us. You know, the big chain stores and other types of big distributors. So I think Mordam is OK. I don't feel that we comprised ourselves anywhere.

PP: Not in any way?

Ruth: No, not at all. Did I feel the change? Yes, I felt the change and I spent a lot of money just to keep up with what we went through in 1994 and 1995. It cost a lot because I had to get more space, more people, and more equipment and I had to do all these other things that I am still paying for. That's not a compromise, that's a reality. All I can say now is that I am trying very hard to get myself to a point where I'm not spending so much money because I don't intend to make so much money.

PP: That's good that you were able to deal with bigger stores and distributors without doing something different.

Ruth: I think so! It takes a lot of energy to sell to those people, but we have always sold records to just about anybody who would pay their bill to us. And from the beginning it's been like, if somebody is going to pay their bills, we are

I'M A DIEHARD INDIE AND I WANT TO WORK WITH PEOPLE WHO ARE DIEHARD INDIES. I THINK MY JOB IS TO BE A PART OF THE SUPPORT SYSTEM FOR THE ARTIST TO FREELY EXPRESS THEMSELVES AND TO EXPRESS AN ALTERNATIVE POINT OF VIEW THAT THEY ARE NOT NECESSARILY GOING TO BE ABLE TO EXPRESS THROUGH A BIG MAJOR MULTIMEDIA CORPORATION IN THIS COUNTRY—EITHER ORALLY OR AURALLY.

is coming into their stores to buy. Most of the time in this business, the chains don't pay attention to us. We know that when we have stores like Best Buy, Blockbuster and some of these other places throwing huge amounts of Green Day on their racks, that there is still only a certain amount of market for them, and after a while Best Buys are pumping Green Day into their racks and there isn't really a market for them anymore. We call those kinds of sales "ghost sales", because these stores were buying, buying, buying records, but they weren't really selling them.

PP: So I'm left wondering if punk has any more power in the marketplace than it did before?

Ruth: The big change that has happened over fifteen years is that we know that we have the power to sell a lot of records! Pop punk was big, but it's time has come and gone. And in the time that it was big, it focused attention on everyone and proved that we are very capable of selling a lot of records. But we still—individually, band by band—are only going to sell a fraction of what a major would. What's hot can still sell a lot of records, but the quantity that each band as a young band can sell is less. Of course, some bands are still capable of selling a lot. But the golden sellers are really rare. And that's my understanding as to why a new band that comes out used to be able to sell five or six thousand records, and suddenly each band is only capable of selling fifteen hundred records, and now we are seeing that for some bands it's even less. But we expect this kind of period and we'll get through it and go on.

going to sell to them. But if they want us to change the way in which we do business, we are not going to do that! We would never pander to anybody. And we won't change what we do. We don't do promotion, we don't do the other things that the labels do. We sell records and collect the money, just like we always have.

PP: What do you want people to know about Mordam in general?

Ruth: If I wanted somebody to know something about Mordam, it's that we are here to support small record labels supporting their bands. And so we want to make sure that the artist, being the most important in the equation, is supported and is able to work with labels who will basically be honest and fair and who will be unlike major labels and unlike major corporations. All we do is the shitwork! Mordam records does the selling and the collecting. That's the part that most record labels hate to do-and so that's all Mordam does. It never touches anything else—it doesn't have control of anything else. There's always finished records in our warehouse; we don't touch people's parts. We don't own the records outright. We don't pay for them up front and then rip people off. The records belong to the label. And then the labels have their deals with the artist. My whole way of doing distribution has been to almost be like we are not there. There's a lot of people who disagree with me about that—that there needs to be much more presence—but I kind of like the way that we move in and get the records there. Our job is to get the sales together. Let the label and the artist have the presence.

PP: Anything else?

Ruth: Well, just that we're a bunch of fans! And although there has been a little bit of turnover at Mordam lately, we make decisions together as a group as far as Mordam and various policies about how we do things. It's a pretty cool place. It's a good place to work; we're all working hard and it's not a corporate set up. If anyone has any other ideas as to what Mordam is about, then those are just misconceptions!

PP: In an old interview you stated, "What independent music is about, is anger against major labels and the music business [on] all levels..." Still feel that way?

Ruth: Well, I still feel that's what I'm about! I'm a diehard indie and I want to work with people who are diehard indies. I think my job is to be a part of the support system for the artist to freely express themselves and to express an alternative point of view that they are not necessarily going to be able to express through a big major multimedia corporation in this country—either orally or aurally. Everybody has different taste in what they like, but I don't count my taste as much as I count what the artist is doing. Is it different from what you can find somewhere else? Does it have a long term enjoyment? Is it not just part of a trend? Now maybe there are, as there have always been, independent labels who behave like major labels-sort of like kids acting like grown ups-but other than them, maybe, I still think independent music is a place to be really wild and off the wall and different in so many ways. I don't just mean in a punk rock way, I mean in a way for all kinds of people to not have to fit into mainstream molds. And it should remain a place in which you can meet people who are independent—die hard independent. A lot of people that I work with feel that they have made a choice not to deal with the aspects of being treated by the mass culture as an artist and being made to conform to something. I think that's what makes being independent vital. It means being different than those big corporations. And it still comes down to how you treat the artist. Are they getting paid? Do they get a profit share? Those things make it a little bit different than working for a big corporation. Do people break? Yeah sure! Because the majors came around and wave a lot of money. People always buckle under the wave of a lot of money. When someone says, 'Hey, I'm gonna make you a millionaire," it's a pretty strong individual who doesn't take the money. This makes independent labels feel like they need to compete with the majors when they can't. So when people who are putting out records, when people who are publishing zines, start feeling that they have to

not want to pay for the records that they bought, they have to because Lookout! has a big record coming out this month and the distributor has to pay on the invoices, or they wan't get anything. That's what so great, it's like a protective umbrello over everyone involved.

A: That was sort of the original intention of Mordam from the start—to get a bunch of labels together to work as one.

PP: And that brings us to the "PR.M." or Punk Rock Malia thing... [nervous laughter as they start twisting their 24k diamond pinky rings] it seems that nabody really knows what goes on behind these door [Michelle murmurs something about a baseball bat] I have heard that when you get picked up by Mordam than you don't even know what really happened, you just get this sign...

A: You've been "bothed."

PP: Sort of like waking up with a horse head in your bed but it's a good thing!

KA: That's so funny you said that because my friend Mark that does Goldenrod Records in San Diego was saying the same stuff as you, because his label came up for discussion and we didn't get the majority and I was bummed. Anyway he was saying the same exact stuff as you. He was like, "What is it?" All I know is if you get picked up by Mordam you never have to do any of your own collections and your label sells really well and he made it sound like it was this magical secret thing.

M: The image that people have of Mordam is so amazing. I used to work at a record store and we would buy from Mordam and it was always perceived as this little closed, secure club. It isn't that way, Mordam has changed a lot.

PP: To be more open oz...

M: Well it's a lot of little things. There are more people here, and a lot of people have many different ways of looking at things. There's a lot more places that buy from us now. And the whole punk rock indie thing has gotten a lot bigger than it used to be. Essentially to me, it is so much more open, but people still have this perception of the way Mordam was four or five years ago.

K: It seems like it has a lot to do with the fact that we deal with the labels exclusively, and that way there are not tons of people talking to the various people at the labels. We do try to keep the labels in contact with the general public as much as possible. The labels write their own descriptions for their records in our monthly flyer. They write all their own one-sheets. We try to keep that information direct from the label.

PP: So the big punk rock boom of lite last few years, was that just because of Lookout! with Green Day or what?

D: I think it was across the board. All the labels, with a few exceptions, just started growing. They were putting out better releases and selling more of them that ever before.

PP: I'm sure that Lookout! must have been approached by every major trying to buy their catalog and distribution. Was it easy to hang on to them or was it not even a factor?

KA: I don't think that Lawrence Livermore would have even thought about leaving Mordam because of the relationship with us and his relationship with Ruth. I think that he probably got a lot of offers. I know that we have our own customers that try and go behind our back like Valley [a major label distributor] calling Lookout! and...

K: Mordam started doing distribution for Lookout! some time during their first four 7"s. That's a long relationship to have, especially with this huge growth with one distributor. It's the same with Alternative Tentades, it's been here from the start.

KA: I think they had a lot of pressure from their bands, and they probably had people telling them that they could make a lot of money, but I don't think that it ever was a factor.

PP: Because it was such a close relationship.

KA: Yeah. I know when we let Flipside and Curbdog go, the other labels probably thought, "Oh, were on the chopping block," but we talked about that at our last convention and the reasons for letting those labels go were really valid. For Flipside, we just weren't really into the magazine anymore and the label was being dealt with by so many people it was just becoming a huge pain.

K: Really the bottom line, before we start a letter writing campaign between Punk Planet and Flipside, is that Mordam is very organized and it is run fairly conservatively. All store accounts are on C.O.D., even the ones down the street that order 2 thousand dollars of stuff a week. Mordam is very protective of the labels in that sense. Some people say that's not punk rock, but at the same time if you put out records, you want to get paid and getting ripped is not punk rock. Maybe to some people it is but...

PP: I can think of a few.

K: Mordam is highly organized and if the label is not, then there is a problem.

PP: Yeah, you have an agreement with the label to sell the records, but they also have an agreement to put out records that you can sell.

K: Right, right. If we make a decision to distribute a label then we usually stick with it...

PP: Do you try and push the smaller labels like Gravity and Jade Tree into the chain stores?

KA: Gradually the different sales people work in smaller releases by the various labels.

PP: Speaking of sales, what was the number one selling record of all time here?

M: The Green Day titles. Lookout! 22 and 46 have sold more that any other titles.

K: They outsold Fresh Fruit?

M: When audited to get the gold record, we figured it out.

KA: For 1996 the best selling release was Skankin' Pickle. Op Ivy sold more than them for the year, but Skankin' Pickle was the highest selling record actually released in 1996. compete, I say no, you shouldn't compete! I will not compete! I will not do those things that major labels do. And to remind ourselves and to remind our artists what those things are, we have to remember that the majors go out of their way to make money and their interest is not in the artist, their interest is in the bottom line. They're not there for the artists. They're not there for the artist's fans. They're not and they never have been. They're there for the bottom line. And hopefully, that's what should make independents different.

PP: Wow, you covered a lot of ground!

Ruth: Yeah, I liked that last bit best. If there is anything that I would like to convey, it's that we are here to be different. All these bands are here to be different. Either with what words they say or in how they do their business. I will always be a fan of that and I will always be looking for that in who I work with.

PP: And I think it's important to realize that everyone has the power to be different and stay different.

Ruth: Well, you do what you think is right, and maybe people will come around, maybe they won't. I mean, I've known some great people in some really awful bands who do all the right things but that doesn't make their

PP: Then I bet all of the infighting that's been taking place recently doesn't make it any easier for you to stay involved.

Ruth: Yeah, but so much of that is so personal with those people. That's why everybody discussing that stuff publicly and all that stuff going public is really sad to me, because it makes everyone think that it's more than it is. And it's really just a bunch of old farts arguing with each other about their philosophy. I try not to go on the internet for that same reason. I might go on and get the weather, but that's it. You can't get involved in that stuff and I try not to react to it. I'm just not going to jump into the middle of the fire anymore, because all of this fighting is stupid.

PP: So what keeps you involved in punk?

Ruth: Well, I can't quite say that I'm really heavy into the punk rock thing anymore. That would be me repeating myself. I'm really heavily into the artist doing their art. Sometimes I like the art and sometimes I don't. But as long as I find merit in what they are doing, I will support the artist and do the best that I can for the them. Most artists can't do what I do, so I feel a part of their support system, whether I like it or not. I haven't hung out in a punk club in a long time. Maybe every once in a while.....

YES, LOTS OF PEOPLE ARE CAPITALISTIC, THEY WANT TO QUIT THEIR DAY JOBS AND I WANT TO HELP THEM DO THAT. I GOT TO QUIT MY DAY JOB AND NOW I HAVE THE HARDEST DAY JOB I'VE EVER HAD!

band any better, because nobody is ever going to care. It takes a certain chemistry and element to make anybody care, but if at any moment in there you're not doing what you think is the right thing to do, then you have lost the right thing to do. And when people turn around and say, "We want to badmouth you," it always seems to invariably come back to a person's intentions. So I say, keep the intentions good and remember why you want to do these records or this music or label. Just do what you love and do it for the right reasons! If you go in and do it for the wrong reasons, you're going to get screwed just like everyone else. Those things are what make it great for me. That's what makes this whole scene great and it will continue to be great for me for the next fifteen years, or as long as people are motivated by their best intentions and their love of what they are doing.

PP: Is that what keeps you doing Mordam?

Ruth: Well, I still think there are a lot of great artists out there. Every day there is somebody new who is doing something interesting. It seems like we just came out of a period where everything was really derivative, and that always comes around and goes around, but there are still a whole lot of artists making fabulous music. Everybody is different, what I think is fabulous music is not necessarily what you think is fabulous music. But there are enough people out there who are genuine artists to keep it pretty damn interesting. Even if I didn't care what happened in punk rock or in pop punk anymore, I would still say that being independent and being involved and doing this work for these labels is important. That's where I started. The drag of the thing is that punk rock has gotten nasty—really nasty. My friends aren't all friends anymore. That's the part that makes me want to crawl in a hole and hide. On the other hand, I still feel that I have so much work to do, and I realize that there are so many other things going on besides all that pettiness!

PP: Does having a family change the way that you think or do business?

Ruth: No! I'm sure there are people in this world who would contradict me on that, but I don't think so. That doesn't change how I feel about Mordam Records.

PP: Well, sometimes you hear people saying that they've had to make choices because they have a family....

Ruth: Well, that's parenthood. You become very protective, there's no doubt about that. If Mordam wasn't working for me, I would have to do something else to support my family, but I don't know if that would be any different than anybody else. I'm very involved with my family and I'm glad for that. I think that it gets down to that there are a lot of people out there who have a disdain for reproducing and so they want to prove the point that you can't be the same person that you were before you had a family. But I believe that I have a much broader experience in my life because I have a family. Does it change what I do everyday? I don't think so! I think that having all of these employees has changed me more than anything! I have a huge responsibility there—really huge. I mean, if I make decisions at Mordam records that seem bottom line oriented, then 9 times out of 10, it has to do with the nineteen mouths I feed.

PP: If you weren't running Mordam, what might you be doing?

Ruth: Some other business. I've worked for myself for so long that I can't imagine working for anybody else. I would probably be doing something similar, but I don't know if it would be in the record business. ©

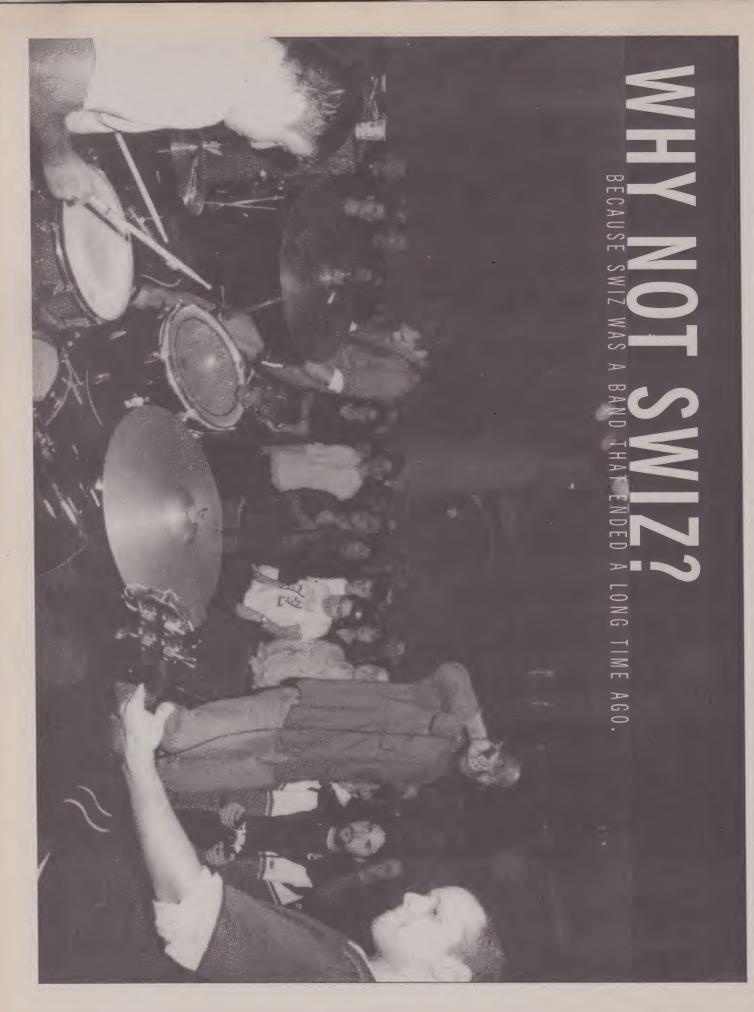
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With the re-emergence of four guys who used to go by one name, but now go by a different, much longer, much stranger name, we see the return of an energy that has become something of an anomaly in hardcore today.

Doing something because you love to do it.

It feels like too many bands today are bent on "success" without bothering to love what it is they're getting successful at. T-shirt and record sales overshadow the music. Hooking up with the right people and getting on the right tours becomes more important than feeling passionate about playing, or creating. Don't you ever feel cheated after shows?

SWEETBELLY FREAKDOWN re-emerge into

the middle of a scene that is more interested in looking good and sounding right than it is about conveying emotion, or communicating anything. Not an entirely different scene from the one they left when that other band broke up.

Honesty and passion are what have always compelled me to listen to hardcore, and the four guys who make up Sweetbelly Freakdown, who made up that other band, the one with four letters and a Z on the end, don't do it any other way.

Shawn Brown was gracious enough to sit in an entirely too hot van, on an entirely too hot day in Boston behind The Rat with me and talk about a bunch of stuff.

Shawn Brown is one of the nicest, most easy going people I've ever interviewed, and I thank him and Michelle for their generosity.

Interview by Josh Hooten. All photos copyright Michelle C. Roberts

The reason that the four of us are back together is because I missed playing with those guys, and they missed playing with me. I wanted to do music, and I just found that I wanted to play with those guys because as far as I'm concerned, they're the best. We were just really into it and had enjoyed the music we were making as Swiz. I missed it and I think they felt the same. We talked about it for probably a half a year before we did it. We didn't want it to seem like a cheesy reunion type thing or something like that because we didn't want to play any Swiz songs. We ended up playing a couple of old songs for the first few shows we did because of a lack of material. But that's all by the wayside now and all the songs we do are Sweetbelly Freakdown. All of them are original. We won't be playing anymore Swiz songs.

Do people pester you for them?

They were for a while because people heard we had been playing a few old songs.

I'm curious about the beginning stages of you guys playing together again. Was it awkward?

It was really weird because it just went like this [snaps his fingers]. Like the 7" and the CD basically are us shooting from the hip. There were only maybe 4 or 5 practices and then we went into the studio. I don't know what it is about us playing together but it felt pretty easy and really natural—like we had never stopped playing! I consider myself really lucky being able to know people like that. It's hard to find people to play with that have even close to the same attitude as you do.

How long had it been since you played together?

Um... maybe 6 years.

That's a long time to be able to pick back up and be able to do it smoothly. Along those lines, how do you feel different as a person, as well as a band, approaching the music now?

I don't know if I feel any different now. Pretty much I feel like everybody in the band is doing it for ourselves. A couple of things have come up since we've started playing. We've been playing I guess what I'd call pretty typical hardcore style shows with mosh style hardcore bands. Those kids are into that sound and they're into that scene and that's cool, but we're coming from a different side of that. A couple of kids came up to me after our show last night in Syracuse and were like, "Hey sorry that crowd wasn't better." My whole thing is like, well they're into whatever they're into and we're into what we're into and it doesn't really affect us. We're just playing. We're doing it for ourselves and if people are into it; that's cool and if they aren't, that's cool too. That's how it was when we were Swiz and we played a long, long time with people being like "What are you doing?" Or not paying attention to what we were doing. Or we were background music to whatever was else was going on that night. It feels kind of the same now, so I don't see much of a difference.

I thought that Swiz was pretty far ahead of its time. At least in the context of what was going on during that time, which was really generic "positive youth" hardcore stuff. It's funny then that there's a huge resurgence of that style of hardcore right now, and it's not any less generic. And you guys have resurfaced right when all that stuff has resurfaced, which kind of puts you in exactly the same spot you were in 7 or 8 years ago.

Yeah, exactly. I mean... even in the bigger arenas, you look at like No Doubt and Reel Big Fish or whatever, that's like what? 6th generation ska? Already? Then there's the whole punk revival. There will be a rock revival soon. Whatever, you know? This music that we play, like the best way for me to express myself, like the best way for me to have access to this world is I try to take what I have and work with that, you know?

Well how do you feel Sweetbelly Freakdown is being received? One of the things I'm curious about is who your ideal audience, or fan would be. I ask because you guys are a little bit older and more mature than a lot of the bands that are out there playing a lot and becoming successful. I'm curious who really connects to what you're doing.

That's an interesting question because I don't really know. I guess just whoever it strikes. It is really diverse now. I guess it's about people's personal tastes. I don't know who our ideal fan is. Like I said, this is what I have the easiest access to, and I try to take what I've got and give what I can as far as performance or music. I don't know if that's an answer.

I'm just curious because I don't actually think you guys could know, specifically because you're not generic and you don't have some preexisting format for your music or your fans. There are a lot of bands whose fan base all have basketball jerseys and humongous pants or whatever, and it's very easy for them to identify their fans or supporters.

I see what you're saying. Maybe we're not marketing ourselves correctly. [Laughs]

"We could do the things necessary to get big. It's not even an issue if we're capable or not. I mean shit, I understand the formula, but I like doing other things." Well, there's easy ways to success and then there are ways you have to actually work for it. I think also, being from D.C., you guys don't fit into the typical "DC sound" either.

Nope.

This won't end in a question, but I'm trying to say that there are easy ways to get in touch with an audience, obvious ways which require a certain amount of appealing to the lowest common denominator, which you don't do. Not that I think most of the bands in D.C. are necessarily dumbing down what they are doing, but there is definitely a crowd there...

Anywhere you go that's going to exist. There is definitely a crowd there. People are always going to have their cliques and their alliances and I think that's just how human beings are. It's competitive out there. If people don't get what you're saying, maybe it's easier to get with people who do. That's kind of the thing that I like about D.C., though. Even though I'm not into a bunch of the stuff that's going on there, there's a freedom to create. Even inside the cliques themselves, people are always searching for creativity—ways to do something a little different, or a lot different, from the other bands. Different ways to express themselves. I'm probably going to get shit for this, but in New York or Boston and Philly maybe—and this may just be because we've been playing strictly hardcore shows—everybody is doing the same thing.



I wonder what it would be like in a world were you guys could get the kind of reaction that all these really popular generic hardcore bands get.

We could do the things necessary to get big. It's not even an issue if we're capable or not. I mean shit, I understand the formula, but I like doing other things. I like the Sweetbelly Freakdown way of doing things—the Jason, Shawn, Alex and Dave thing.

But then again, the payoffs for using the formula must be pretty tempting sometimes.

Sure, yeah. I mean there are some bands out there selling T-shirts for x amount of money and windbreakers for x amount of money. We were at a show yesterday and there was a kid selling pens with certain hardcore slogans on them! We do our T-shirts at home, we try and sell them as cheap as we can and it's mainly just to try and get to the next show or to pay back money that we borrowed. It's never really been about trying to make as much money as we can as quickly as we can or anything like that. Or to wait for the hype to resurface and then take it for all it's worth. Yeah, there are bands out there doing that. We're talking about hardcore or punk rock but in a lot of ways it's not that different from arena rock. Whatever. People can do what they' want but if you're going to ask why some things exist or why some things remain the same, you have to look at all of that, you know?

Being older, like not being kids anymore...

I still consider myself a kid. Maybe not physically, but mentality definitely.

I meant "older" in the sense that you have responsibilities. I'm assuming it gets a lot harder to find four people who can all get up and go on tour—or are even willing to. I know that when I get home from work, I have a lot of stuff I have to do but all I really want to do is watch TV and go to sleep. And on my weekends I don't want to work either. So how difficult is it to get the band to go off and do these things?

We know each others limitations and we've actively discussed that. It's never like an opportunity is presented to us and one or two people are like, "Yeah we're going to do it, we have to fucking do it!" That stuff gets brought up at practice and it's like, "Can you do this?" And if somebody can't do it, that's fine. That's how it has to be, and that's how it was laid out from the beginning. Jason and Dave have a little bit more freedom, but they have their band Blue Tip and they are very committed to that. I have a job and I have bills to pay; I live with somebody; I can't just get up and go. So, from the beginning we all knew there were going to be some limitations. As far as people talking about a big tour this summer, it's not going to happen. Blue Tip has their agenda, Alex and I have our agenda. We're working on something for maybe April '98 or summer '98 when we can

slow things down a little bit; maybe go out for a week or two, something like that. It's hard, but it's only as hard as you make it.

As a hobby, I'm sure it's pretty rewarding.

Yeah. And that's really what it is, a hobby. And hobbies are things that you love.

I think that's a pretty healthy way to think about it.

I definitely didn't want it to be some high pressure situation or worrying about the hassle. A lot of people are in bands now that are reaching for

bigger things. I'm just not interested in that and I don't think anybody else in the band is interested in that. I can't really imagine, I would like to have it at this level right now and be able to pay my bills here and there maybe, but as far as trying to make the big money? No.

What other outlets do you have?

I ride my bike. I do some drawing. I do some writing. I cook. I brew beer.

Really? You brew beer?

Yep, yep, yep.

Wow!

Yep. That's been my big creative endeavor. It's a lot of fun. It's definitely cool. Also, I like to go camping. I'm checking out this place called "The Tracker" which is a wilderness survival school in Asbury Park, New Jersey that I highly recommend to anybody who's interested in primitive living or ancient technology. That's kind of a hobby of mine. That's about it.

One thing that surprised me the last time we spoke, was that you said you hadn't been interviewed very much. One of the reasons that struck me as odd was that there is a serious lack of minorities in hardcore and punk, and I assumed that when Swiz was in full swing, a lot of people—especially in the climate of late '80s hardcore with racism being such a huge topic for bands to cover—would



be interested in getting your perspective on things. Maybe nobody knew how to bring it up.

I guess I never really thought it about too much then because I was just really into the music. I don't think about it much now. I don't know, maybe its the fact that people didn't know how to approach it. It's now 1997 and we still don't know how to approach'a lot of issues as far as race and stuff. I never really thought "oh god, nobody is interviewing me because they don't want to talk to the black guy."

Well, I assumed everybody would want to. But maybe didn't know how to bring it up. I've been trying to come up with questions relating to it myself without much

luck. I guess I'm just curious if you find this scene to be as open minded as it thinks it is.

Well, then you have to ask is America as open minded as it claims to be? I don't know. It depends on what level you're talking about. I can't say I've felt it all the time, but on some levels I assume there is some overt racism going on as far as the scene goes. I don't know. It doesn't really seem to affect me. But if you're talking about racism on the level like, "Hey I'm not racist, but I don't know any black people," yeah. There probably is a lot of that going on. Hardcore, like America, is predominantly white. The people who are controlling what is going on in the hardcore scene, or in politics, or in the country, or whatever, are all white, which is fine. There are good white people, there are bad white people, there are nice white people and there are ugly white people—just like black people. When we talk about this, we start getting into the country itself. And as far as the country itself goes, we haven't really dealt with any of the issues of racism because we don't really talk about them.

The scene just seems really proud of how accepting it is, and how open minded it is, and yet it's only white kids. Maybe that's just how it works out but...

I don't think it's because anybody out there in the scene is really like, "Oh we've gotta keep this white." I think it just goes back to the divisions of the country. You have black people that grew up white and if you're going to talk about music or style or even just points of view on other races or people, they're just as closed minded as white people can be. Or black people who are living in a fantasy world like there is no racism, or there's tons of racism. There're all kinds of levels of that. Sometimes, I think it works out just because of the way it's worked out historically in America. Some black people feel they have to listen to black music, and not that "crazy" rock and roll shit. And there are some white people out there who wouldn't really categorize themselves as racists but maybe just aren't interested in hip-hop.

One of the weird things about the town I live in is that all the kids, all of them, listen to hip-hop and from head to toe, they dress the part. The town I live in is overwhelmingly white. In fact, I just found out the other day that it's still standard practice not to hire minorities to work for the fire department. It's really weird to me to here two white kids calling each other "nigga."

I think with that, it's a combination of marketing and kids starving for some kind of identity for themselves. Maybe coming from a place that doesn't hire any minorities, you kind of know what's going on. So that shit plays out on the outside in how you talk, or how you dress because you're trying to rectify yourself in some way. There are blacks out there who try and fit into the whole white thing too. Like really try, going so far as denying their own heritage or whatever. At the same time, I think it may be a yearning for some kind of understanding and that's the way it's expressed. That's a strange phenomenon because when I was still in school, there wasn't anything like that. But when I was getting out of high school, all that shit happened and I was like, "Huh?"

I think another driving force maybe that these kids don't think of themselves as racists because they're into hip-hop, which isn't necessarily true, but their parents are probably racists. I know this is a bold assumption, but if it's okay for the fire department to not hire minorities, I think it's safe to assume that a decent amount of the older people in the town are okay with that—they are racists.

Well maybe they're looking at it like—since their kids are into it—black people sing and dance. That's always been an issue. Look at jazz, look at rock and roll. We've always been viewed as entertainers so it's always been acceptable for us to do some things—but the line is drawn there. That's what I think some of that's about.

Yeah, as well as it being a way for white suburban kids to feel a link to some culture, as they don't have one of their own.

I think it plays out in their parents too. "Well I know I can't tell this guy he's a nigger in front of all these people, but covertly I can think whatever the hell I want." Or, "In my backyard, I can act however I want." And

then you get into how much they've been forced to accept. Like look at Michael Jordan. He makes what? Like 90 million dollars a year now? And even though he has a lot of money and people might equate that with freedom, I think he's trapped in a way because he's a marketing tool. I think he must know that with any black person who gets to his level, there are going to be white people that you appeal to because you're winning the game, or writing music they like or whatever, but that's going to be as far as it goes. It's just something you accept.

I think another part of it for these kids is that being into black culture is the ultimate rebellion against their racist parents.

Well that's big money nowadays. That's interesting too. If you want to think about hip-hop now, there's this huge violence issue and the only reason there's an issue around violence is because kids in the suburbs are shooting each other. Before that, nobody cared about what was going on with the Crips and the Bloods. Those were just crazy black and

"It's now 1997 and we still don't know how to approach a lot of issues as far as race and stuff."

hispanic people. But now that kids in the midwest are walking around saying, "Oh, I'll cap your ass." Now it's such a big deal. If you go into that you have to go back into marketing. The companies saw one little thing that they could key in on and sell: marketing to black and white.

Right. It's not like gang wars started with N.W.A. But they did only start to exist to a lot of people because middle class people started fucking up other middle class people. Which is weird because I grew up middle class. And now that I live on my own, if I added up my income, I'd probably be considered lower class. It's the same with all my friends—we're poor, but we're not the poor.

Right, right. I hear what you're saying. I feel like that a lot myself. It's like, "damn I'm not making any money, but I'm not fucking poor." Like *poor*.

And I assume I have the same difficulty paying my bills that poor people have, but the catch is that I have a safety net to fall back on. I could get money if I needed it, you know? So I guess "poor" has more to do with resources than your actual physical situation.

Yeah it does. I think it has a lot to do with resources and stigmatism and stuff. Like homeless people and mentally ill people. It's all part of the move to make the middle class disappear you know? It's not like the rich don't want more. [Laughs] That's what capitalism is built on. Grab is much as you can and fuck everybody else.

To distill it down even further, I guess it comes down to how unappealing you are. The more unappealing you are, the less you're going to be able to get from people. Which goes back to marketing and if you're not beautiful or well balanced...

It all goes back to marketing, which I guess is a good thing and a bad thing. Like, if you have morals about it, it could be good. But I think it shouldn't really come down to bands and stuff trying to make themselves as appealing as possible to the largest audience they can. It should be more like you do what you do and if people are into it, cool, and if not, that's fine too.

Output

Description:

20 QUESTIONS with the band: BOXER

- **1.** When did your band form? Um, about two years ago, in October of 1995, buddy.
- 2. When will it break up? When the bomb drops, pal.
- **3.** What have you released so far? There's been so many but the latest is the *They Came From Massachusetts* compilation on Big Wheel Recreation. Recently we recorded a six song e.p. with Brian McTernan at Salad Days in Boston entitled *The Hurt Process*. At the moment we're shopping it around to some labels. If you're interested, let us know.
- **4.** Why do you play the music that you play? I must say, we all have creative input in the song writing and the final product is a little bit of each of us. We're not rying to sound like anyone, we just play what feels good and sounds good to us.
- 5. What's the weirdest thing you've ever had happen at a show? Well here's the scoop...We were playing this show in New Jersey and there was a ton of rock pumpin' and kung-fu jumpin'. Sneakers started flyin' and girls started cryin'.
- 6. What's the best show you've ever played?

Here's the 411 tuff stuff: it's a tie between three. We played with Lifetime at The Middle East in Boston and that was rad because they are one of our overall favorite bands. Then we played a basement show around the corner from our house with Braid and The Get Up Kids. It was the last show at the house so it was packed with kids. Last but not least we played outside on a beach in Long Island, NY. We got naked and went swimming afterwards.

7. State your purpose.

To rid Gotham City of crime and avenge the murders of our parents.

- 8. How do you describe yourself to relatives who have no idea about what you play? Well grandma, it's 100% rock n' roll. It's like one of those good hot water enemas you like so much.
- **9.** How do you describe yourself to kids in the scene who haven't heard you? 2 cups Lifetime, 1 cup Gameface, bake in oven at 450 degrees until golden brown. Sprinkle Face to Face generously on top, let cool for 15 minutes. Serves eight.
- **10.** What bands do you see as your contemporaries? Miltown, Six Going on Seven, In My Eyes, Jejune, and all the other kick ass Boston bands. Basically our friends, you got that fuckface?
- 11. What is the antithesis of your band? What's an "antithesis" Professor Plum?

- 12. Outside of music and bands, what influences you? Livin' and lovin'.
- **13.** What is "selling out"? When you go to your neighborhood porn shop and ask for the tripple ripple butt plug and the clerk says "sorry pal, sold out."
- **14.** If you could make a living off of your band, would you? As much as we joke around, we take Boxer very seriously. It's what we want for our careers. It's what makes us get out of bed every morning, it means everything to us. I mean we don't want to be millionaires or anything, just as long as we can pay the bills we'll be happy.
- **15. Where do you practice?** Basements, kitchens, garages, living rooms, anywhere we can set up and rock out.
- 16. If you could play on a four band bill, with any bands that have ever existed, who would you play with, and what order would they play? The Beatles, Descendents, The Misfits, and Boxer. Because you know damn well The Beatles get all the ladies, except John Lennon...he's dead.
- **17. What goals do you have as a band?** To tour forever, keep wreiting music we love and always have fun.
- **18. What makes for a good show?** As long as one kid is rockin' out it makes us so happy. Oh yeah, and those dick tricks are pretty cool to...gotta love that monkey cunt.
- 19. If you were to cover a song (that you don't already) what would it be? Wave of Mutilation by The Pixies. Either that or "Life is a Highway." No, definately "Life is a Highway."
- **20.** What's the best show you've ever seen? The show we saw last week was pretty good, who was that band? Well anyway, thanks for the questions and remember, only you can prevent forest fires, only you.

Boxer

99 Calumet St. #2, Boston, MA. 02120

20) QUESTIONS with the zine: FELL ON EVIL DAYS

- 1. How long have you been doing your zine and what issue are you on? Fell On Evil Days was born out of frustration about three years ago. The thoughts and concepts were always there, it just took some time to formalize what I was doing. Then it took some time for me to be able to put my dreams and expectations to good use. Just recently I released issue number four and I am currently working on finalizing issue five.
- 2. How long do you plan on doing it for? I plan on doing Fell On Evil Days as long as I feel I have something that is of worth and of value to contribute to our little music community. At this point in time, I don't foresee anything that will prohibit me from working on the Evil Days. So, I guess right now there is no end in sight, I just have to be cautious of the occasional road bumps in life that could slow me down. I just have to budget my time between school, work and my friends and I should be fine.
- **3.** What would cause you to quit? The only reason I would ever quit doing the zeen would be if I ever lost the passion for it. If there was no passion backing this zeen, then there would be no point for me. But as long as there is music out there to love and things to experience and write about in life, then I will always have a job masterminding *Fell On Evil Days*.
- **4. How do you distribute your zine?** Well, with the first couple issues, I did it myself. I would take my little photocopied zeens to shows and I would try to pawn them off to people. I never really got very far that way. The only people who bought them were friends and I think they only did it because they felt sorry for me. But nowadays after a few modifications to *Evil Days*, I am able to sell them much easier, but even this way is a lot of work. Actually, I like to rely on a collective (a family if you will) of dedicated distributors and kids who are willing to help me out with distribution. *Fell On Evil Days* would just be a figment of my imagination if I didn't have my friends helping me every step of the way.
- **5.** Why is your zine called with it's called? One of my favorite hobbies is reading. Out of the books I have read, *Paradise Lost* by John Milton happens to be a favorite of mine. In this book, he wrote a passage that reads: "More safe I sing with mortal voice, unchang'd to hoarse or mute, though fall'n on evil days, on evil days though fall'n, and evil tongues; in darkness, and with dangers compass'd round, and solitude." So I took that passage and used it for my inspiration for the title of my zeen. It is also a philosophy of mine that the world is in its darkest days. From the emergence of diseases like the ebola virus to deforestation, the world on a whole has fallen on evil days.
- 6. In order of importance, what would you rank as the three main subjects you cover? Well I don't really cover subjects per se. I just cover topics that I feel are relevant and just, I also cover sub-

- jects that are dear to me. I guess one common thread or ingredient from every issue is the music aspect of the zeen. I love music so much, it motivates me enough to write about it. With out the music of the punk and hardcore community I wouldn't have a place to call home. One thing that I really hope my zeen portrays is that I am an honest person and I am doing *Fell On Evil Days* with sincerity.
- 7. What's the hardest part about doing your zine? That's a tough question, it's difficult to put a finger on it. I think the thing that takes the most work is gathering up the money to cover the cost for printing. That takes a lot of dedication. It's also hard to budget time. For instance, there are times when I know I should be studying for an exam, but instead I end up doing zeen stuff. So in that way, it's distracting.
- 8. What's the most rewarding? There are so many rewarding things about doing a zeen, I don't even know where to start. One of the most rewarding things is when I first get the zeen back from the printers. At that moment, when I first hold the finished copy in my hand, I feel satisfied knowing that I breathed life into this project. Also one of the most rewarding things is when I get a letter from someone telling me that they read the zeen and they got something out of it. That, for me, is what's important. That's what I feel is rewarding.
- 9. Are you doing your zine for the free records? No, absolutely not. The record review section is a new addition to my zeen for exactly that reason—I didn't have one in my earlier issues because I didn't want people to think I was doing it for the wrong reasons (i.e. for free records). I think if someone is doing a zine just for free records, then it's a sad state of affairs. When you do a zine, you have to do it for the right reasons. People aren't stupid, they can figure out if you have an alterior motive for doing a zine.
- 10. How weird was it to interview golf superstar Tiger Woods? Well, damn it all. I didn't have a chance to interview him because he was off at a Thoughts of Ionesco show. With a first name like "Tiger," you know he is going to be an Ionesco fan. It's a shame because golf interests me so much...
- 11. What was the best and worst interview you've ever done? Hmmm, that is a toss up, I could say Ray Cappo was the worst because I interviewed him a long time ago for issue two. When I tried to talk to him he was just an arrogant asshole. I was just a young nervous kid interested in what he had to say, but oh no he was just too cool. On Halloween, I had a chance to interview Glenn Danzig which was pretty cool in the fact that I was able to talk to him, because I am all about The Misfits. But it was kind of a letdown because he didn't take me seriously. So in a sense that was probably my best and worst interview.

21. Quote your favorite thing ever said in the pages of your zine. "I sit here with my thoughts and wonder what are they? I mean what are they there for? Do they serve a purpose? Or are they just there to keep me occupied at night as I lay awake? Are they even my real thoughts? The world has been in existence for a long time and who am I to think that my thoughts are original? Or maybe I am supposed to do something with my thoughts instead of keeping them locked up in my head. Maybe I can make a difference or better yet maybe I can make someone happy or give someone something to relate to. I guess that is what this zeen is, an outlet for some of my thoughts and feelings over the last couple months. I don't know if what I'm doing is important but I know it means a lot to me and if you get something out of this then I am happy."—"last cares", Fell On Evil Days issue number four.

13. Do you write everything yourself? If so why? If not, how do you find writers? Well, basically, I write all of my own pieces, but in issue five I put together a group of my friends who have each done their part in our scene as far as music is concerned, and who also have the ability and skill to write. This column section will be titled "they all changed their names to Chicago" and it should prove to be very interesting.

14. How is your zine produced? Does it cost you anything or do you scam it? Right now the zeen is printed on newsprint. Since nobody usually has free access to a web press, I am forced to pay for the whole thing. Since I didn't charge for ads in my last issue (number four) it cost me a little over five hundred dollars and that is a quite a bit of money for a part-time dental assistant. But to tell you the truth I really don't mind because I love what I'm doing.

15. Handwritten vs. Typewriter vs. Computer? I never handwrite anything because I am a faster typer and I feel it's a waste of time for me. Then I send it to my good friend Ron and we get together to decide how it should look then he lays it all out on a Macintosh using all sorts of programs that I don't know how to use—or even say as a matter of fact.

16. What other zines inspire you? Well, there has been a ton of zines that have inspired me in the past, one's like *Social Skills*, At Arms Length, I Stand Alone, Ping, State, What's Wrong With Me?, Element... and the list goes on and on. I can't really pinpoint one particular zine. I just respect anybody who puts the time and effort into doing a zine because it seems like doing a zine nowadays is a thankless task.

17. What is "selling out?" "Selling out" to me is a not some complicated issue, it's just when your doing something for the wrong reason. For instance, if I was doing Fell On Evil Days for any other reason besides the love I have for it, I feel I would have sold out. If I was doing this zeen for free releases, personal recognition in the scene or any pathetic reason like that, then I feel I would be betraying myself.

18. If you could live off of your zine would you? No, I really don't think I would. It just doesn't seem right to me, not that I think the whole concept is bad. I just feel the catalyst behind doing my

zeen is because I love to do it and that is it. I guess I would be afraid that the monetary aspects of doing the zeen to support myself might distort my view on what is best for the zeen.

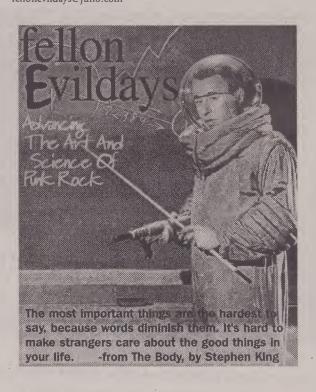
19. If you had a chance to interview someone who you most likely would never have a chance to talk to, who would it be? There are many people in this world I would of loved to have gotten a hold of for an interview. People like James Joyce, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and J.D. Salinger are just a few. But if I had a chance to sit down with anybody, I would have to say I would love to have had the chance to sit down with John Coltrane, because the man just amazes me. His talent goes beyond words, beyond comprehension. He did so much for jazz and so much for music that I can't see myself wanting to interview anybody different.

20. Describe your dream interview (who, where, what setting?) As far as bands go, I would have loved to of gotten a chance to interview The Misfits around the time when Walk Among Us came out. It would have been so great to sit down with Glenn, Jerry, Doyle and Googy. That would be a nice addition to one of my zeens. I would also love to do an interview with this Scottish 80s pop band called Big Country. I grew up on their music, so they really mean a lot to me. I would love to do an interview with them somewhere in the highlands of Scotland.

If you are interested in receiving a copy of issue four which has interviews with Lifetime, The Enkindels, Despair and The Get Up Kids plus lots of writing and sincerity, please send two dollars to:

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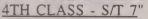
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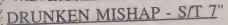


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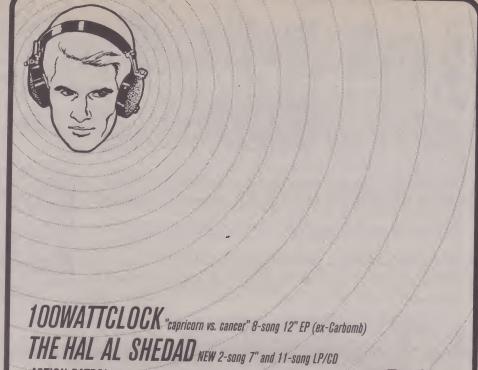
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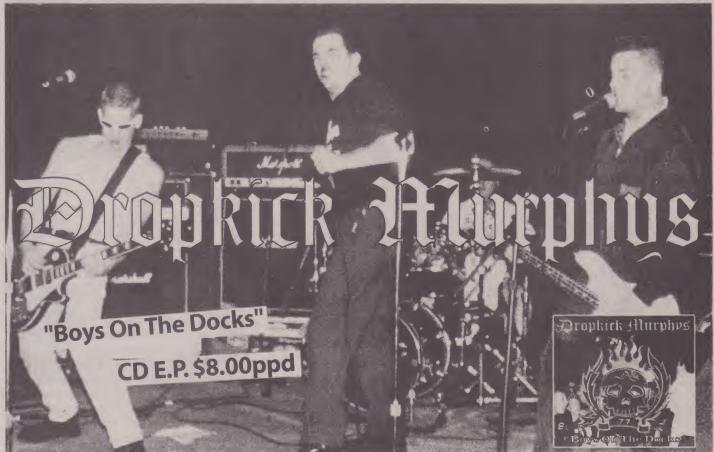
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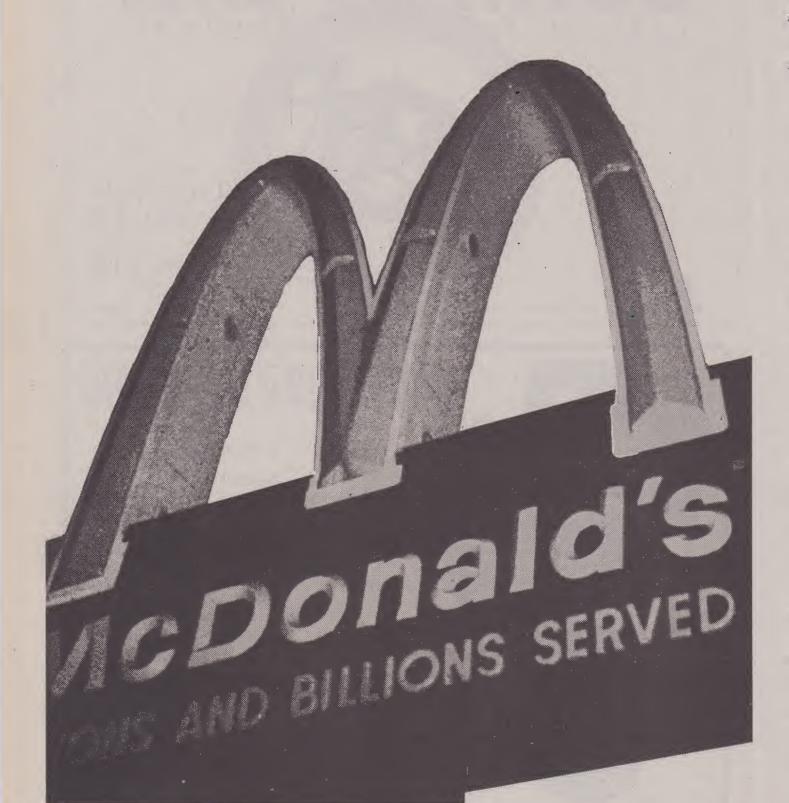
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TRAITS OF A CHARMENT By Patrick Burkart

Pow! Right between the eyes!

In June, Helen Steel and Dave Morris, two underemployed anarchist vegetarian activists from London, finally landed a crippling blow to Ronald McDonald after fighting McDonald's in England's longest running libel trial. Steel and Morris personally fought McDonald's in court after publishing a handbill critical of the international burger company in 1985. The handbill was called *What's Wrong With McDonald's*. McDonald's didn't like it, and the company sued for damages.

After years of testimony and millions of dollars spent by the company pursuing the case, the court was largely convinced of their harsh accusations, including McDonald's promotion of "McCancer," "McMurder," and "McDisease." Steel and Morris won the major points in the case, but lost on a technicality and have to pay a nominal fine. In claiming their June victory, these peace punks have issued a challenge to ordinary people to take their lead and "stand up to, and beat" powerful forces like multinationals and governments whenever they need to. England was tough territory for a couple of poor activists to fight McDonald's, a \$30 billiona-year multinational company. The cards were heavily stacked against the punks. It was no surprise that of all the incidents of clown-bashing worldwide, McDonald's chose to go after this particular libel case because the rules in England

So for three years, Steel and Morris dropped everything to spend years learning the law, collecting expensive testimonies and reports, piling their apartments high with research and paperwork. As they waded through their paperwork for three years, they worried about how to raise money to continue arguing their case in court. But they raised it.

Considering the big guns McDonald's brought out to fight them, Steel and Morris's fight was nothing short of heroic. After 28 pre-trial hearings, the real McCoy began in June, 1994. It ended three years later. "It completely dominated our lives for over four years," says Morris. "It's been a long ordeal. We've had no time for anything else."

At the end of the bozo-bashing, they had compiled a thorough case against McDonald's to prove that:

- * A diet containing McDonald's food can lead to ill health
- ★ McDonald's pitches its bad food to kids
- * McDonald's is responsible for outbreaks of food poisoning
 - ★ McDonald's pays shit for wages and is anti-union
 - ★ McDonald's uses beef grown on destroyed rainforest land
 - * McDonald's dumped as trash what it promoted as recycling

When it was all said and done, the two impoverished, radical activists had pulled down the clown's pants and given Ronald's golden arches the high hard one.

favored the multinational company.

In the US, the legal burden of proof is on the prosecution (the party filing the complaint) to prove that the libel is unwarranted or untrue. But in Britain, the tables are turned, and people taken to court for libel (or defamation of character) are obliged to prove that the accusations are true. Since Steel and Morris couldn't afford a defense lawyer, they educated themselves about the law and represented themselves in court, a feat made more difficult by being denied a jury trial, leaving them to fight harder to persuade a single judge in the case. To make matters worse, McDonalds was sparing no cost: Steel and Morris were going up against a small army of top-dollar corporate-suit lawyers.

When it was all said and done, the two impoverished, radical activists had pulled down the clown's pants and given

Ronald's golden arches the high hard one. The judge weighed the evidence against the claims, and ruled the activists only technically at fault—and leaving most of the claims against McDonald's substantiated and "true" for the purposes of the judge and court. The judge in the case issued an 800 page decision including all the ugly details of the worldwide McDonald's hamburger operation.

Send in The Killer Clown

McDonald's had hoped that by objecting to every single point made on the peace punks' flyer, it would



Shit Work Shit Pay Shit Food

McDonald's employees talk about what it's like working for the clown.

Collected from the vast McSpotlight database of witness statements from the trial.

Adrian Brett worked for McDonald's from May 1986 until May 1991

I recall one accident when a female crew member was working "Regular Grill" when some staff were trying to mop up when the girl on the grill slipped on the floor, fell on to the grill burning her arms. After about 5 mins [they realized] that they had no choice [but] to send her to hospital. She was sent with some reluctancy.

We would serve lettuce, onions, shake mix that was out of date—only if it had actual mold on it would it be thrown away. The shake machine was never cleaned properly and on one occasion maggots were actually found in the shake machine in Bury St Edmunds. The drains came up quite frequently in Colchester and the store was never closed only if the sewage became visible to customer. Food would be served even if all the contents had been dropped on the floor.

Keith Baker worked for McDonald's between November 1984 and May 1985

One time just before Christmas 1984 the whole crew was clocked out at 12:20 am by the 1st Assistant Manager (Cassy—sorry no second name known). After some argument at 2:30 am approx the clock cards were altered by hand. ... When we complained, the Areas Supervisor, a Mr Terry Eagle, was brought in. When we told him that we would take further action he asked us what did we have in mind. When we told him that we would go to a union he said that it would do no good at all, as all that McDonald's would do is shut up shop for a while just like they did in Australia when they started their own union.

C. Harrison worked at five different McDonald's restaurants between 1980 and 1989

Burns and cuts were not really taken seriously, they were not usually put in the accident book. We were told all the time to "hustle,' this meant move quickly. At the counter, people would be running, especially on Saturdays. ... Generally people were rushing around the store even when it wasn't busy—this was the hustle element.

Managers were encouraged to verbally prompt people to hurry—"lets have some hustle." In my experience, nowhere else do people work as quickly, or is it expected of you as part and parcel of the job. McDonald's is a very pressurized environment and nowhere else are you expected to work at that level for such long periods of time.

Elin Odlolien has worked at McDonald's since December 1993

We got together and joined the Union. A collective agreement was reached and one would expect things to settle down, they sure didn't. Night and weekend extra pay was paid, but "what about overtime pay" we asked.

"No that's not the way things work at McDonald's. Here you are paid only by the hour," was the answer.

"What about mutually agreed upon working schedules," we asked.

"What about mutually agreed upon working schedules," we asked.
"No, that's not the way things work at McDonald's. We can't
have working schedules like that " was the answer.

have working schedules like that," was the answer.

"What about the pay increase I was promised after my promotion?"

"No, that's not the way things work at McDonald's. You're not good enough yet, but soon." Was the answer.

Peter Sutcliffe worked at McDonalds for a year between 1986 and 1987

On one day I was carrying five boxes of frozen chips at once and I banged my hand into the metal frame of the freezer room door. This caused a deep cut in my right thumb. This incident was logged in the store's book for accidents at work. I bandaged up the wound which seemed to work at first. As the morning went on blood started seeping through the bandage. Because the funch time rush was coming up, I was encouraged by the store manager to stay at work. Eventually I had to leave because blood was dripping from the bandage onto the cooking surface where I was frying the hamburgers.

Sarah Inglis worked at McDonalds for almost three years. During that time she helped spearhead a unionization campaign.

Cam held a crew event, which are pretty regular. Crew events are sponsored by Cam in which almost all staff get together and play activities. At this particular crew event the theme was Olympic Bobsledding. The crew simply was supposed to go tobogganing. Then I believe Cam decided to throw in some creative art in the snow. He had people lie down in the snow in the form of 'NO' and the managers yell out "do we need a union?", the crew obviously was supposed to reply "NO!" If you didn't lie down and scream 'No' you were labelled a union supporter. People thought that if management found out that they supported a union, management would fire them. This was obviously used as an intimidation factor.

The night before the [union] vote management held an anti-union meeting in which all of the crew were invited to. ... At this crew meeting management also had a slide show with the theme of "Just Say No". Once again it showed people goofing off at work having a great time. This slide show was put to tunes such as "Its a Wonderful World" and "Shiny Happy People".

Karen Anstee a part-time McDonald's Employee for a year between 1986 and 1987

A burst water pipe caused a flood in the work area of our branch: The water came rushing through the ceiling above the work area and there was soon at least a quarter inch of water over the entire area. I was working at the till that day but covered the making of the fries whilst the employees normally responsible tried to mop up the water. The manager did not stop us from working despite the treacherous conditions and the employees did not stop working. I myself continued to work around the vats of boiling fat regardless of the situation. It was only after about twenty minutes that I suddenly woke up and realized the danger in which I was putting myself by continuing to try and keep up with the normal output.

David A. Dudley-Boyden worked at McDonalds from September 1984 to July 1989

I spoke with fellow employees (in a jocose manner, although—in my own mind—I actually took the matter quite seriously) about organizing ourselves and forming a union at McDonald's. I was overheard by a manager and warned very sternly, in no uncertain terms, that such talk (even if conducted in a tongue-in-cheek fashion) would lead to the termination of my employment. In fact, the manager made it clear that a person had been fired in the past for enunciating union sympathies.

persuade the defendants to give up early. The company predicted that the proceedings would last only about a month. It began printing up counter-propaganda calling the flyer a pack of lies. So Steel and Morris counter-sued for libel, which meant that it was McDonald's turn to defend its claims against the punks. Now it was getting down to the nut cutting.

History has been good to the bourgeois, and to their burger companies. So until now, history has smiled on McDonald's, but not on its critics. For years, McDonald's had successfully imposed a regime of self-censorship upon vegetarians, ecologists, and opponents of global capitalism by countering any criticism or satire with court challenges. Respected newspapers and television news publishers, even Prince Philip, have been forced to apologize to McDonald's in years past after public comments about McDonald's greasy products. The apologies came quickly on the heels of nasty lawyer letters sent by the minions of the Evil Clown.

Gacy was a Clown Too

McDonald's legal big wigs tried and tried to convince the protesters to settle out of court. But that wasn't going to happen, as Steel and Morris weren't in it for the money, they were in it for the message. After it became clear that Steel and Morris weren't going to settle, McDonald's redoubled their resolve and spent nearly 10 million pounds (about

\$6 million) to blow the activists' case out of the water. "McDonald's had hoped for a quick show-trial against their critics in order to use any verdict as propaganda worldwide. But . . . for the first time in history, a multinational corporation has effectively been put on trial over its business practices-- promotion of junk food, exploitation of workers and animals, advertising to children, and damage to the environment." (McLibel Support Campaign)

What's so amazing about the story is that McDonald's permitted it to spin out of its control so early. The case began to get national and international attention early. This was a direct result of Steel & Morris'-as well as a feisty band of other activists'—media savvy. They quickly exploited the "David and Goliath" aspect of the case

for the media. Additionally, sympathetic activists quickly set up McSpotlight (www.envirolink. org/mcspotlight), a web page repository of information about the case that has been visited well over 10 million times since its inception.

McDonald's lost the spin as soon as they took on the activists with reckless zeal and uncharacteristic over-reaction. As the court case dragged on, and the grisly details of the case emerged, Steel and Morris could show that the whole McDonald's strategy was miscalculated in the beginning, and losing badly.

This was unexpected. In the past, McDonald's has gone out of its way to avoid public relations disasters, especially since 1984, when in the US, James Huberty shot 22 people dead at a McDonald's in San Ysidro, California, after yelling, "I've killed a thousand in Vietnam and I'll kill a thousand more!" (Huberty never went to Vietnam.)

Since that dark day, the company's PR machine has been extremely successful. Carefully orchestrated advertising and press releases have helped McDonald's penetrate new foreign markets, even toughies like India, where cows are sacred and a hamburger is, by extension,

holy shit. And reports from McSpotlight indicate that the company reportedly used stealthy tactics to build a restaurant near the old Dachau death camp and quash public outcry.

> With years of practice outmaneuvering resistance and clamping down on the

"Coca-Cola is nutritious because **it i**s providing water, and I think that is part of a balanced diet."

speech of its critics, McDonald's was picked as the hands-down favorite to win this fight with the peace punks. And in leaked company documents

exposed during the trial, it appears that all along, McDonald's believed that it could "contain" negative public relations associated with the McLibel trial.

But the McLibel case is far worse than a dozen Hubertys rolled into one. It's been widely (and not incorrectly) described as "the biggest Corporate PR disaster in history." The McLibel case shows that a "multideath-corporation" (in the words of MDC) obsessed with its international corporate image wasted untold millions to help bolster and popularize the best arguments of some of its strongest critics.

Honking Ronald's Nose

Steel and Morris used cunning legal strategies such as the counter-suit to force MickyD's into entering into the public record embarrassing admissions and testimony. Reading over the 800-plus pages of the judge's summary and decision, it is clear that the company introduced a great deal of sensitive and previously confidential information into the record that its critics would have been proud to print in the original handbill. If the tobacco lobby had hired the McDonald's legal team to defend Joe Camel's reputation years ago, those clowns would have put Phillip Morris out of business by now. McDonald's crack legal team managed to get these gems (and countless others) into the court record:

- * A McDonald's cancer expert found it "very reasonable" to say that "A diet high in fat, sugar, animal products and salt and low in fibre, vitamins and minerals is linked with cancer of the breast and bowel and heart disease." Then McDonald's own witnesses went on to explain that a typical McDonald's meal was high in fat, saturated fat, and sodium content, and low in fiber.
- * When asked to defend what he meant when he said that McDonald's food was "nutritious", David Green, McDonald's Senior Vice-President of Marketing explained that Micky D's fat-full food "provides nutrients and can be a part of a healthy balanced diet." By that same reasoning, your own shit is "nutritious." As if that wasn't bad enough, this clown continued. Coca-Cola, he explained, is "nutritious" because it is "providing water, and I think that is part of a balanced diet."
- * Micky D's has ways to make you buy their food! In a confidential Operations Manual read out in court, McDonald's explains to employees that "Ronald loves McDonald's and McDonald's food. And so do children, because they love Ronald. Remember, children exert a phenomenal influence when it comes to restaurant selection. This means you should do everything you can to appeal to children's love for Ronald and McDonald's." If you don't, the rug rats will scream their heads off in the back seat for the next eight hours of the trip home. How's that for an offer you can't refuse?

- * There is "no landfill problem in the UK," explained one McDonald's suit when talking about McDonald's excessive amounts of garbage. When asked if he felt there was no problem with "dumping lots of McDonald's waste in the ground," the suit replied, "I can see [the dumping of waste] to be a benefit, otherwise you will end up with lots of vast, empty gravel pits all over the country." Thank god for Mickey D's. What would we do without them?
- * Evolution McDonald's style. Den Fujita, the President of McDonald's Japan explained that "the reason Japanese people are so short and have yellow skin is because they have eaten nothing but fish and rice for two thousand years ... if we eat McDonald's hamburgers and potatoes for a thousand years, we will become taller, our skin [will] become white and our hair blonde."

Over 2 Million Served—and Counting!

The stunning victory for the peace punks in the McLibel case will surely expose the company to more negative publicity than it has had ever had to handle. Even during the earliest phases of the McLibel trial, over 2 million What's Wrong With McDonald's leaflets have been distributed in the UK alone. The McSpotlight web page exposing the trial has reprinted the leaflets, the enormous court decision, and much of the extensive media coverage the case has generated. Before the verdict, the site was counting a million access every month. As news of the McLibel case slowly percolates through the Web and conventional media channels, McDonald's rapid-deployment PR clowns will surely jostle for spin-control.

Since the company technically "won" the McLibel case, McDonald's has some ground to stand on. And, of course, the mainstream corporate media is crowing about McDonald's "victory." But the solid ground for the clown is more like a thin and shaky tightrope. The PR department's "official positions" about the substantive points of the case, such as health risks of eating their food, environmental risks of the hamburger economy, and so forth, can no longer assert that McDonald's is squeaky-clean. In fact, making any positive mention of the company's contributions to health, environment, and labor, means that McDonald's runs the risk of sticking its clown-foot in its big, red mouth.

Better Than a Happy Meal

Although Steel and Morris have no money, the court has ordered them to hand over a hefty chunk of change. The McSpotlight folks are busy keeping the reporters and columnists in facts, figures, and quotes, not to mention running a killer website (updated daily). They need support to keep paying the bills, and to keep the public education campaign rolling.

McSpotlight is offering hilarious T-Shirts, badges, stickers, and posters for cheap (6, .20, and 1 pound(s), in that order), as well as an informative video documentary (6 pounds). If you want to contribute to the strength of the McConsciousness Raising, send international money orders in British pounds to:

McLibel Support Campaign, c/o 5 Caledonian Road, London N1 9DX, UK.

And avoid McDonalds like the McPlague.

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ver the past year or so, the most archetypical icon of "family values," the Disney Company, has become vilified as the epitome of evil by the Religious Right. This anti-Disney sentiment came to a head June 18th, with the announcement of a boycott of Disney by the Southern Baptist Convention and its 16 million members. The once unimpeachable producer of children's films which mythologically justified everything from American imperialism to banal celebrations of German cars, has been charged with the crime of promoting homosexuality because of its support of same sex partner benefits, Gay and Lesbian Days at Disneyland, and most shocking of all, its endorsement of comedian Ellen DeGeneres' coming out publicly on her pasty white sitcom, *Ellen*.

It had been a long time coming. The Southern Baptist Convention had been warning Disney for over a year that its millions-strong denominations of the control of the contro

change its attitude towards homosexuality in its film and television productions as well as its hiring practices. Finally, tensions between Disney and the leaders of the SBC reached a critical turning point, when church leaders introduced a motion calling for the ban. On June 18th, it was adopted, and many other Christian denominations in the US have sounded their voices in support.

Despite the fact that the Southern Baptist
Convention took the initiative in its attack on
Disney, several denominations, led by the agitation
of the infamous American Family Association and
other powerful groups in the Religious Right, had
been calling for such a boycott for some time. After the
Republicans lost the election, the Christian Coalition, under attack
by the Federal Election Commission for purported voter fraud, had to
find a new cause to reconstitute the voting constituency that the Religious
Right had built over the past five years. Charging that America's number
one producer of family entertainment was, in fact, a purveyor of so-called
"anti-family" ideologies could not have been a more ideal way to create a
new issue with which to rally Christian soldiers.

Even for simple-minded Christian, it's a no-brainer: When all attempts to take over political infrastructures appear to be failing, the next best thing to do is to create an artificial crisis which de-legitimates the establishment as a justification for a renewed attempt at taking it over.

Nothing could have provided a better target for such an action than an icon like the Disney Corporation. And besides, if played right, it could even prove to be profitable! Somehow, if you could prove in the eyes of God fearing, *Fantasia*-watching, downwardly mobile, suburban consumers that Disney was in collusion with Satan to make homosexuality a legitimate lifestyle option, then one could certainly argue that such religious conglomerates as the Trinity Broadcasting Network were the real inheritors of Disney's legacy in order to make every parent want to force their children to watch religious television.

Economic strategies for cultural domination aside, the real thorn in the side of the Religious Right was Disney's legitimation of the very lifestyle and gender orientation that the Religious Right rejects. As obvious as that may seem, it's what lies underneath the Disney Corporation's economic endorsement of homosexuality which scares the Religious Right to death.

The seemingly easy transition that a company, which has historically produced cultural mythologies which legitimate a heterosexual, white, Christian culture, can make to a sexually pluralist and open one, appears to be too much to handle for some Christians because it means that the old cultural framework for maintaining social order is not binding. What inspires fear in Christian cultural planners is the possibility that the cultural imagery defined for America by Disney could indeed evolve into a sexually tolerant, seemingly liberated sexual framework which could produce new mythologies as equally influential as the old ones.

But that is not what concerns us here. This is just

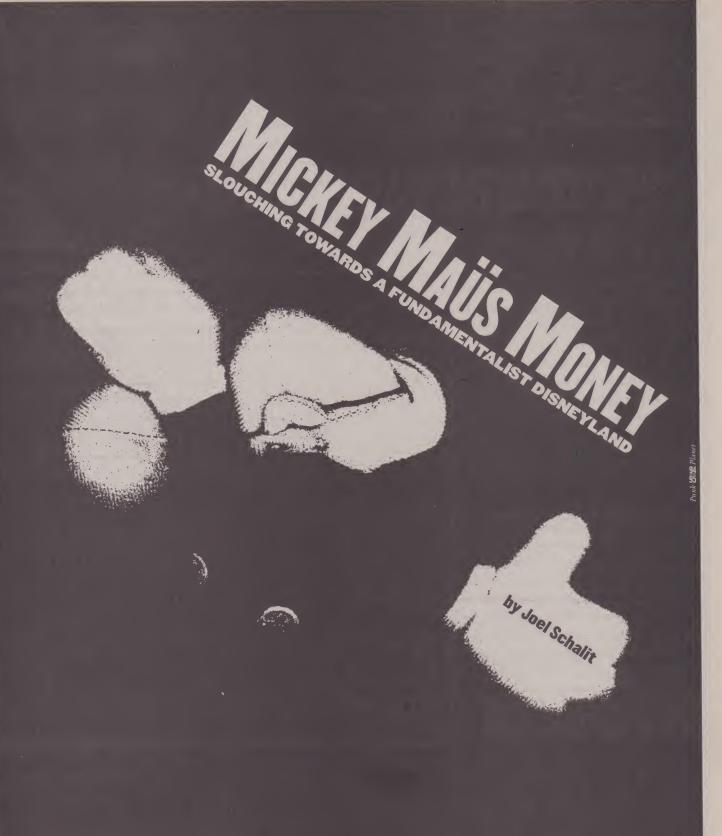
the backdrop to the real issue at hand for progressives who are caught in the awkward position of having to defend Disney—an enormous media conglomerate which has historically produced radically conservative cultural commodities with deeply reactionary messages hostile to such basic concepts as democracy, freedom and equality—for its hiring practices.

Sure, the dreaded corporate ogre has shown signs of increased benevolence by sponsoring Gay Days and giving its artists the freedom in certain—albeit highly controlled—instances to "come out" on national television but, as has been well documented, the

Disney corporation remains an archetypical corporate and cultural monopoly with many entertainment subsidiaries which market whatever messages it deems profitable. It is these ideological inconsistencies that most of us have learned to live with because they characterize almost every aspect of cultural life in advanced capitalist societies. When the monolith seems flexible, you take what you can get and for that brief moment, you breathe a little more freely.

But it's this inconsistency that upsets religious moralists because, more than anything else, they want certain kinds of cultural monoliths, like Disney, to be infallible. That's why such organizations as the Southern Baptist Convention charge that Disney its undergoing a hostile takeover by "homosexual Jewish activists," as one Christian commented. They can't seem to get it in their heads that every capitalist orifice like Disney is bound to be radically inconsistent because that is how capitalism works: it fetishizes everything. So when it sees a pool of potentially lucrative consumers, it's going free them up for the consumption process just like it would any natural resource. Only this time it's human.

Many leftists are caught in this same fantasy world, but from the other side of the fence. They want corporations such as Disney to remain "fascist" and inflexible in order to fit into their own pseudo-leftist doctrine



of purity which tends to divide everything up between distinct spheres of good and evil. However, capitalism doesn't respect such boundaries. The exchange of goods and services, particularly in the cultural realm, tends to erase them because everyone, regardless of their political orientation, fetishizes certain commodities.

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Since punk politics come from progressive politics and abstract their submerged and defensive posturing even further, then looking at one proposed liberal response to the Southern Baptists boycott of Disney is a good place to start to see where we can make changes. The most popular proposal in place is to simply have liberals buy out Disney stock in order to bolster the company from the lost investments of conservative Christians, who are being told they should divest themselves of Disney stock as part of the boycott.

For those of us without the cash to invest in the stock market (don't believe the current hype about the market and America's growing riches. Most of us still don't have a dime to spare for Wall Street), we are being asked simply to "buy Disney." Whether it's by going to see *George of the Jungle*, or by picking up a pair of *Hercules* shoelaces, progressives are supposed to buy buy buy.

The logic behind these moves is to show public support for the firm's sexual politics by investing in it financially, at a time when conservative Christian investors are trying to influence company policy by withdrawing their financial support from the firm. If there's no threat to financial stability to Disney, or so the liberal logic goes, the firm will be forced to continue to recognize same sex relations when it comes to structuring employee benefits.

What's wrong with this strategy? Well, there are several problems. To begin with, it repeats the same liberal tactic of throwing money at social crises in order to find a cure to problems that have their roots in class conflict. Terminating deeply ingrained cultural prejudices such as religious homophobia by investing in a firm whose bottom line is still profit will not work because it sustains the economic divisions which give rise to homophobia in the first place! If the strategy of liberal investment in a firm like Disney accomplishes anything, at its best it will set an example for incorporating and tolerating sexual difference in the corporate environment of monopoly capitalism. At its worst, such an achievement will help assimilate sexual difference into an exploitative, hierarchical corporatist labor framework.

The tradeoff is simple. By investing in Disney to protect it's recognition of same sex partnerships, we end up destroying the universal implications of gay liberation by aligning it with big business and the class conflicts it perpetuates to stay in business. This in turn ends up helping to transform sexual politics into identity politics precisely because we divorce sexual politics from class politics—the same politics that would prohibit anyone in their right mind from supporting the second largest media monopoly in the world, one which is openly hostile to labor, maintains large factories of underpaid workers in countries run by military dictatorships like Burma, and routinely promotes reactionary family values ideologies through its nauseous movie and music subsidiaries.

This kind of "alternative" act of consumption has always bothered me because it is quite literally—for lack of a better term—a sell out. Many pro-

gressives believe that investing in any form of culture is the only way to protect our universal freedoms. The problem with that kind of attitude is that it's defensive, not offensive. It lacks imagination because it tries to eliminate threats to civil liberties by throwing money at political problems which were caused by money in the first place.

Punk inherits this unimaginative, defensive posturing from liberalism because it fetishizes the act of buying musical commodities. No matter how many Sleater-Kinney or Dead Kennedys records you buy, consumption is consumption. It's within this incredibly limited space that punk attempts to act out its deep political imagination.

It's a space that becomes even smaller by it's insistence on fetishizing not just the records, but the format which these recordings come in. You know what I'm talking about: the old record vs. CD debate. Arguing about music formats and investing tons of time and energy into preserving them doesn't

really accomplish anything except create a new commodity where there was none, by aestheticizing the physical medium used to disseminate cultural commodities. This is a desperate move. Instead of insisting on preserving civil rights, punks insist on preserving ridiculous commodities like vinyl, until the next metaphor for alienation comes along, like

Digital Versatile Discs, and the whole process starts all over again.

Maybe vinyl does sound better than digital, but if you buy as many records as punk zines tell you to, the chances are that your hearing is so bad that you probably can' tell the difference anyway. Besides, arguing over the superiority of analog over digital sounds fetishizes the character of sound in the same way that we fetishize distinctions between types of art, and this signals a loss of artistic and political imagination. Once again, the real discourse is lost in the noise.

• • •

The lesson punks can learn from artificial crises such as the Southern Baptist's conflict with Disney is to look at the content and strategies of liberal replies to conservative cultural initiatives. Once again, liberalism ends up perpetuating the potential for future conflicts between communities of difference (whether they be sexual, ethnic or, as is the case with punks, cultural) with the so-called old guard or mainstream. Cases like the Disney conflict also shed light on the degree to which we ignore and overlook the political histories of the institutions we seek to be accommodated within, such as the culture industry, which tends to force us to fetishize everything, including the formats of the commodities they give us, as part of their overall monopolistic thrust that extends from Burma to our own buying practices. We have to recognize that what these types of liberal responses to conservative cultural initiatives do is force communities of difference—in a terrified and defensive response to minority ethnic, cultural and sexual persecution—to remake themselves in the image of the establishment. This in turn makes us continually complicit with the forces and relations of a system which deliberately produces marginalized sexual, ethnic and artistic subcultures in the first place. That's why instead of "Joining the man," as the 'Panthers were wont to say, we have to find other ways to distinguish ourselves from him. @



THE SHOWDOWN IN MOTOWN

snapshots from organized labor's last stand: the Action '97 ralley in downtown Detroit.

by Paul Chan

video stills by Daniel Sinker • photos by Andrew Natale









No alarms and no surprises. That's what everyone—journalists, labor activists, union supporters from around the country, even some of the rank and file from Detroit's own unions—expected from Action Motown '97, the two day "mobilization of solidarity" that took placed on the last weekend of June.

A chorus of ho-hums dismissed the event, which included a teach-in and a mass demonstration in support of the striking Detroit newspaper workers, as too little too late. And they might have a point. In the eyes of many, the fight for a fair contract for the Detroit newspaper unions—and the larger ideological battle between the resurgent labor movement in America and big business—ended months ago, with victory squarely in the hands of big business.

Still, everyone loves a parade, especially one that might gather all the right ingredients for a progressive political movement—people, passion, piss and vinegar. And the timing couldn't have been better. In this era of corporate downsizing and the rising power of the mega-corporation, people are becoming fed up with low wages and job insecurity. Or, as the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists from St. Louis chanted on the streets of downtown Detroit, "We're Fired Up! Won't Take It No More!" Their battle cry, along with those from the United Auto Workers, The American Federation of Teachers, and hundreds of other unions great and small echoed the fiery determination displayed by the struggling Detroit newspaper workers to stand and fight against the inhuman profit motives of corporations here and abroad.

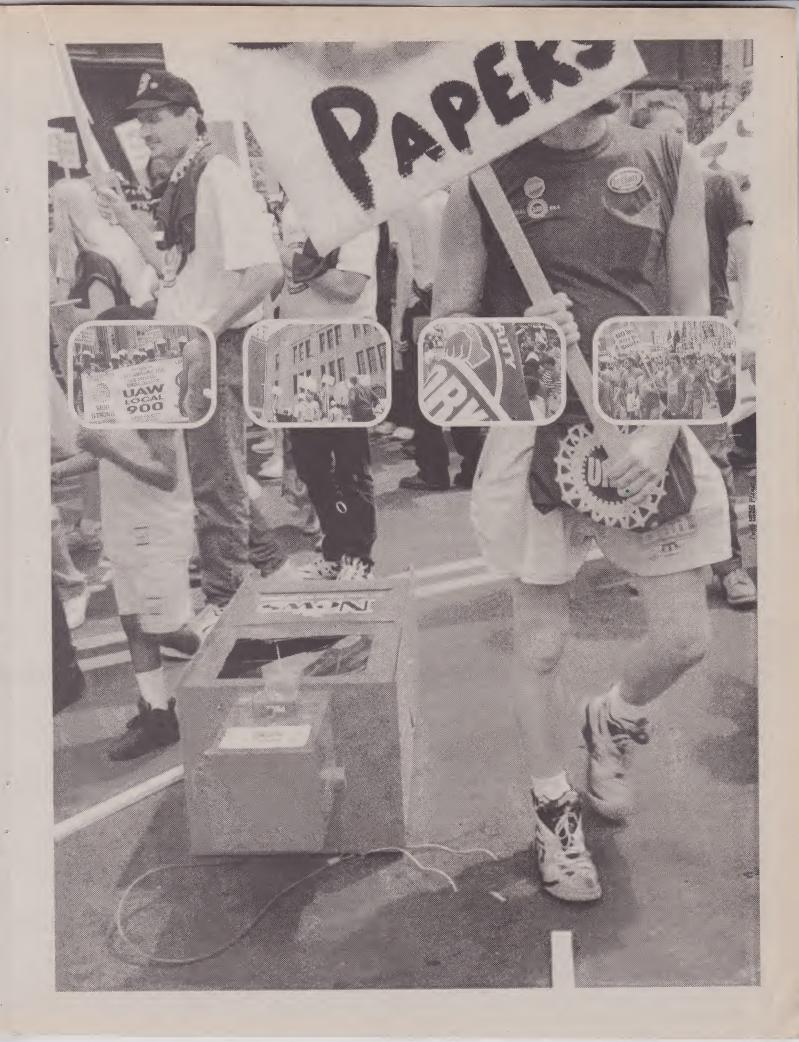
The fight first began two years ago, when six union contracts were about to expire at the *Detroit Free Press* and the *Detroit News*, the two major papers in Motor City. Negotiations for the jobs involved, including those of writers, editors, delivery drivers, mailroom clerks, and photographers, began in April '95. As negotiations dragged on, it became obvious that the papers' corporate owners (Gannett and Knight-Ridder, the two largest newspaper chains in the country) weren't interested in agreeing to new contracts. By early July, it was patently clear—the papers broke off talks and unilaterally imposed new wage terms and work conditions. The line was drawn. On July 13, the six unions went on the pick-

et lines. Strikers blocked the delivery trucks driven by scab laborers. Sitins, boycotts and demonstrations threw a wrench into the work of the two scab papers. Striking workers started their own paper, *The Detroit Sunday Journal*, with the motto "continuing the struggle for justice and contracts." The Unions called for a federal hearing demanding that Knight-Ridder and Gannett be brought up on charges of unfair labor practices.

By the end of the 1996, a year and 8 months after the strike began, Gannett and Knight-Ridder had lost over \$300 million in strike costs and lost earnings. Victory? Not quite. *The Sunday Journal* reported that by late 1995 top executives of *Detroit Newspapers* (also a joint operation by Gannet and Knight-Ridder) admitted their intention of dragging out the strike and the company's legal appeals against the unions until the strikers found new jobs, retired or died. They were willing to take a loss in order to break the unions. It was a war of attrition.

The strikers needed the kind of help that can counter the tactics of a corporation with money to spare and lawyers to throw around. The only way that they could get this kind of assistance was through enlisting the support and solidarity of other labor groups struggling for better wages and working conditions in North America. Luckily, they weren't alone, because the Detroit newspaper strike is one of many such labor struggles taking place in the US and Canada right now, from the unionizing efforts of Border's employees in Chicago to the Chicano Strawberry pickers in California, Asian textile workers in Manhattan, and General Motors strikes against outsourcing in Ohio and Ontario. They're all fighting for the same right to determine the conditions in which their labor power is to be sold during a period of corporate downsizing in a new service economy.

The timing seemed right for this sort of national worker solidarity. While workers fighting corporate downsizing is certainly nothing new, labor militancy is. It was as if, after several decades of slumber,



labor in America became a political and cultural force again. Unions like the United Electrical Workers reached out internationally to other unions in Mexico and Canada to launch campaigns against NAFTA, which not only acted to strengthen worker solidarity but sought to challenge the nationalism and racism that had become endemic in the rank and file of unions in America. Unions began actively organizing again, with special emphasis on those who had been left out of the mainstream labor movement before: women, people of color, gays and lesbians, and Canadians and Mexicans. There were even internal reform efforts, most notably the cleanup job of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters in ridding their union of mob corruption.

The crest of labor politics new wave of popularity came in October 1995, with the election of John Sweeny, Linda Chavez-Thompson and





Richard Trumka to the leadership of the AFL-CIO. The new voice and inspiration which they gave to the labor movement expressed a new emphasis on progressive politics and labor militancy which had been conspicuously lacking since the 1930s. The new AFL-CIO leadership's cumulative experience in revitalizing their own distinct spheres of the labor movement suggested that they would radicalize the national movement once they entered its upper tiers. Richard Trumka, for example, as president of the United Mine Worker's in 1989 waged a successful campaign against Pittston Coal using creative, militant tactics which eventually forced Pittston to concede to union demands. The Detroit strikers counted on the AFL-CIO to bring those same types of tactics against Gannett and Knight-Ridder on a national level. Gannett and Knight-Ridder had to be challenged not just in the hot zone of Detroit, but everywhere they owned a paper.

It never came. The "new" and "militant" AFL-CIO seemed reluctant to intervene in the struggle. It pointed to the sorry fact that the "new" labor movement was nothing but the old one: conservative, orthodox, unimaginative. Without national support to re-energize their struggle, the Detroit newspaper workers were left to fight for themselves. They fought a good fight, but giants are hard to slay when your wallets are empty, your bellies are hungry and your hands are tied. For many, the fight ended this year—cruelly enough, on Valentines day—when the six striking unions offered Gannett/Knight-Ridder an unconditional return to work. This was a double blow for many of the workers since not only did it signify a surrender of the principles which they had been struggling for but also a slap in the face of the entire concept of a union: 5 out of the 6 of the locals did not even let their members vote on the offer. As of this writing, less than 10 percent of the original work force of 2,000 have been rehired.

We are in Grosse Point Farms, an affluent suburb of Detroit 4 months after the union's capitulation to Gannett/Knight Ridder. There are

around 500 of us, marching, screaming and jeering at a simple but elegant 2 story house, protected by a high wall and a small troop of Vance security guards—the goons of choice for Gannett/Knight-Ridder throughout the Detroit newspaper struggles. They stand, like the house, in silence, watching hundreds of marchers gathering on the street in front of the house. The unruly crowd screams words of warning to the surrounding homes in this posh neighborhood, "Your neighbor is a crook! Your neighbor is a crook!"

It's the second day of Action Motown. Today promises to be *the* day of action, with small rallies and protests like this one around Detroit all morning, followed by a large demonstration and march through downtown Detroit in the afternoon. The protesters in Grosse Point Farms are after Frank Vega, the CEO of *Detroit Newspapers*. And what better way to drive





home their message that they will not give up than to go to Vega's home and tell him during breakfast. The protest has a carnivalesque feel—laughter and anger mix with the signs of solidarity, turning this quiet, wealthy community—for a brief moment—into a rabble-rousing locus of love and rage. It's unclear whether Frank is home, but it doesn't really matter because the protest is just as much a celebration of the coming together of people in solidarity with the defeated Detroit newspaper workers as much as it is a protest against Vega.

After an hour of protesting, Bob Ourlian, striking worker and Sunday Journal staff writer gathers the crowd. He introduces Reverend Ed Rowe to the loudspeaker. Rev. Rowe has been at the forefront of the struggle, giving the movement a spiritual dimension that other union struggles have lacked. Rowe has been instrumental in hosting strike fund-raisers, and providing general support to the struggling workers and their families in his congregation downtown. He has stood along side the workers through it all; he has been jailed, beaten and threatened for his actions. It hasn't phased him. In a union town like Detroit, it seems appropriate that Jesus' disciples should fight like hell for the working class. His message this morning is one of hope:

"By the end of the day my friends, you [the striking Detroit workers] have lost a lot. But you have gained more than the people who kept the money. You have gained more than the people who bowed down to profit. You have gained more than the people who walked across the picket line. By the end of the day, you have not only made yourself richer, you have made this community richer, you have made this union stronger. It will never be the same. When you pour your energy back into those papers, they will write for justice in a way they never have. They will change the scope of who read it and who didn't, who felt angry and who felt divided by it. [Whether] these papers survive in Detroit or not, it don't matter to me, but there'll be a paper in this town. And it will never be the same."



At the corner of Trumball and Michigan, where Tigers stadium is located in downtown Detroit, there is a sea of blue t-shirts flooding the intersection. You might not think anything of it on a hot Saturday Afternoon—just another Tiger's baseball game getting ready to start. But this is no game. It's D-Day for Action Motown, and the troops are ready.

Union leaders estimate the total body count at 100,000. In his editorial "Motown Shutdown" the following week, *The Nation's* Marc Cooper would later estimate the demonstration's attendance to have been a mere

street—it became a ritual for passing marchers to kick the living shit out of these yellow and blue metal boxes as they passed them. Some even took time to pose for photos next to one of these "reformed" newspaper dispensers.

Of the tens of thousands of people marching in the sweltering heat, there are blacks, whites, Chicanos, Asians, men, women, gays and lesbians—any ethnicity, creed, sexual orientation you can think of was there. But what surprised me was how many of these people were young. There are sons and daughters of union families. There are also a significant number of new union members, supporters, labor activists, party representatives,









20,000. On the steaming pavement just west of the stadium, I'd swear there are 50,000 supporters from the United Auto Workers alone. Just half a block in front of the UAW are the National Federation of Teachers, poised in red T-shirts and large banners with their emblematic apple logo marching in support of the striking Detroit workers. Farther ahead are the GEO, the newly organized Graduate Employee's Organization—their unionizing efforts on behalf of the thousands of graduate teaching assistants in colleges and universities have focused attention on the absurd wages and working conditions in schools across the country and brought labor politics to the forefront on many university campuses. The sea of bodies goes on and on. From plumbers to designers, from labor party leaders to union militants, they are all chanting, marching and raising hell—all adding their voices to the cries of the 2000 locked out workers.

Despite what happened in February, the general mood here on the tarmac is that the Detroit struggle isn't through. It's even printed, writ large, across the front of the 8 page Action Motown newsletter: "IT'S NOT OVER!" And it isn't: Two nights before the rally, an administrative law judge found Gannett/Knight-Ridder guilty of unfair labor practices and ordered the corporations to put all the striking workers back on the job, with back pay. While it's both a legal and moral victory, the companies, in all likelihood, will engage in lengthy appeals until, as executives have already made painfully clear, the workers find new jobs, retire or die. The ruling is no small victory, but if jobs are to return to the striking workers, victory must be won on their terms and not in a court of law. Only the pressure of a large-scale labor movement can provide enough pressure to force the companies' hand.

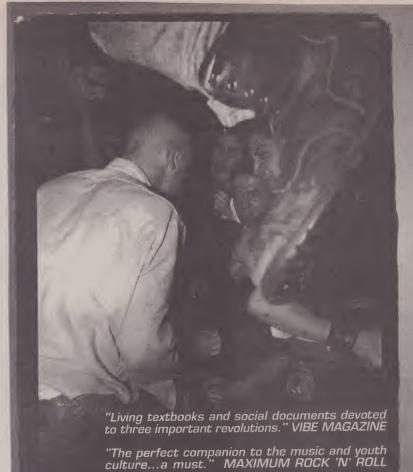
As the demonstrators weave their way towards Hart Plaza, the final destination point of the march, they stop at the *Detroit Free Press* Building, where thousands of protesters have begun to taunt the scab workers inside. The chants and screams, which vary depending upon union affiliation, slowly merges into one big voice, proclaiming, "NO SCAB PAPERS! JUMP!" This last proclamation was aimed directly at the few scab workers who are daring enough to look out the window. The march moves on, loud and boisterous, leaving no *Free Press* and *News* paper dispensers left standing on the

and the young and curious, like myself, whose interest in labor lies precisely in the upsurge of activity surrounding the labor movement these past few years. With the success of the AFL-CIO's Union Summer—where college students work as union organizers, helping struggles around the country plan demonstrations, prepare for legal aid, and practice civil disobedience—organized labor seems to be reconnecting with American youth.

But it will take more than just a leftist summer camp to jump start a new labor movement. However, all the ingredients are there for one. No other age group gets more routinely exploited in the workplace than the new generation of unemployed and underpaid twenty-somethings. Subsequently, there is a rising tide of resentment from high school and college graduates who find that there is no such thing as good jobs and social mobility anymore. But rarely does talk about the lack of good jobs lead to the tackling of structural inequality. Can a new, re-energized labor movement articulate the new experience of disenfranchisement in a post-industrial, service economy and use it to construct a new labor movement which will fight for higher wages and more civil rights?

The assembly line may have taken a back seat to the computer, but the shift from industry to information as the primary mode of production in America doesn't mean a shift in the politics of the work place. Exploitation remains exploitation, regardless of how the mode of production changes. For things to transform, feathers will have to be ruffled, toes will have to be stepped on. Irrespective of what has already happened in Detroit, it is clear that for the fight to go on, a new strategy—one that eschews the "politeness" of mainstream unionism—will have to take place. The bigger question is, however, whether this strategic impasse in Detroit will affect the thinking of the labor movement in general, especially the top brass at the AFL-CIO, whose call for a new militancy is precisely what touched off the resurgence of interest in young people who are tired of feeling helpless in an age of underemployment and dissatisfaction. Play hard and play dirty. Will Detroit? Will Sweeny? Let's hope so. My millions of friends working at Burger King for 5 dollars an hour and their friends staring at computer screens for 8 hours a day with no health benefits are itching for some action. @

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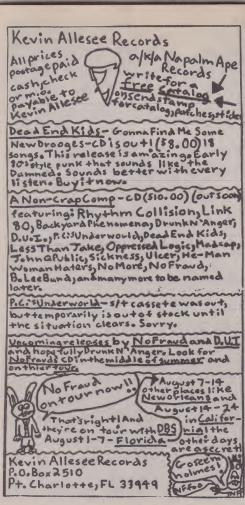
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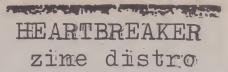
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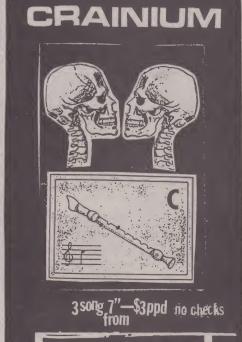
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Dirty Money By Ayn Imperato

> in the restaurant mutilating his omelette with his fork. I sat staring out the huge bay windows at the early morning street, the peo- paper to find my face and leopple rushing by like they were actually going somewhere real important. Not like they were just going to their lame ass jobs.

I worked managing a goth/gargoyle store on Haight street in San Francisco for a year. but one day the doors just closed and there I was- BAM- unemployed, sitting in this cafe drinking coffee like it was my new profession wondering how the fuck I was going to make rent at the end of the month.

Half the time I worked at that store I was employed under the table, so it turned out I wasn't eligible for unemployment for over a month. Now, after working my ass off schleping gargoyle statuettes to gosh-damaged suburbanites for a year under the thumb of a boss that made the word "psychotic" sound like a good time, I was ready for a break. The fact that my right to unemployment checks were

denied had left me pretty grim. Mundo was in a similar position, week as me, so we could kick it and suffer and play and fuck and scrimp our pennies and run celebrate our beautiful unemployment together.

But then reality strikes with his nasty fists. The money factor. were bills to be paid and the food times as an appetite suppressant

I looked over at Mundo. He had cut his biscuit in half and was making it bark like a dog. Was this really our fate?

I scanned the classifieds in the local free papers for hope. I considered the "Ladies Needed for Nude Magazines" ad. "\$800 a day." It was tempting, but I decided against it.

Sure it would be quick cash thought of opening next weeks ard-bikini-clad body next to the 976-PUNK ad. Gruesome.

I tried other options.

"Thousands weekly stuffing envelopes. That's how I'm going

He looked up at me and

"Oh shut up," I muttered. dreams be snuffed by a boy who makes his biscuit bark like a dog.

Then I stumbled across a viable prospect. "Cash for messy Look better in mud."

I thought, ok. I can sploosh some cash. How bad could it be? It didn't sound pornographic. And have to do?

That afternoon I went home and called the number. The photographer was very enthusiastic. "Well." he explained. "What I'm



Ok. Whatever.

clothes off?"

"Yes," he said, a little too enthusiastically. "But it's not like that. I assure you it's not pornographic. More artistic."

"Can my boyfriend come and

"Well, he can if he partici-

"Cool," I said. "I think he'd be into it. I'll get back to you." I hung up.

I sure as hell wasn't going to go to a mud quarry out in the middle of Burn Fuck San Jose nowhere by myself with a strange man and get nude and submerge myself in goop while he took pictures. That would be stupid.

So I asked Mundo if he needed an extra hundred bucks. him what it was about. He was reluctant and first, but within 10 minutes he was getting all Darwin on me, practicing his new role as primordial beast. He got totally worked up about it. "Let's do it right now! I wanna get down and dirty in da mud!"

The next day I called to set it up and to agree on the terms. \$100 each for the day, plus conprints from the shoot. Cool. The photographer scheduled a date for us. "Set in mud" as he put it.

The night before the shoot we practiced our "primal moves," the funniest being Mundo mounting me from behind with his best Neanderthal look on grunting, "Duh!" If nothing else, this would be amusing.

So we drove down to San Jose and met the photographer dude. He was largely as I expected. Upper middle class grey balding dude with wild eyes and a loud shirt and a red four wheeler to take us into the depths of the

quarry pit for our nude-mud extravaganza. He was friendly. He gave us the hundred bucks up front, cash, which was cool. After wasn't a scam. We drove up and down through the mountains and quarrys which was really really gorgeous. He spread blankets chattering away about this camand how good the mud felt. He undressed and picked our nude way down the rocks into the mud.

We had to cover every inch in mud-our bodies, face, hair. kverything. We made crusty punks look like Ivory soap girls. We slipped into the slippery mud and spread it on each others bodies. The photographer held up a mirror and it looked like were were wearing slick body stockings. It was incredibly erotic and we laughed and spread the mud around and hugged and kissed time with it. The photographer came down into the mud with us and started snapping. He let us do pretty much whatever we wanted yelling, "Stop!" or "Hold that! Hold that!" when he wanted a particular shot. We slopped around, acting primal, climbing on top of each other, pretending to rise screaming out of the mud. But after a while we settled down. I tried to keep it classy, moving into a lot of statuesque poses which, luckily, he dug. I'd in a muddy pornographic shoot for a hundred measly bucks.

After a while though, he started to get demanding. "What I really want," he said, "is some muddy EROTIC shots." So we got a bit more erotic and I opened up a bit more. He began to shout, "Spread your legs! Get on top of him!"

Ok. Ok. I kept reminding myself that lots of folks in Beverly Hills would pay a bundle at a spa for a mud job like this.

of a man with an ERECT PENIS covered in mud. Can you work him up a bit?"

So I did my deed but even though Mundo looks so sexy slathered in mud, it was awkward and strange with the dude stand-

We kept on playing around, touching and kissing and posing with the dude periodically yelling, "Work his penis! Work his penis!" which made us bust up laughing. Sometimes he'd say, "Raise your ASS up in the air. Like that! Yes! Yes!" and snap a shot.

Ok, so this was sort of like soft porn for a hundred bucks. Whatever. The guy was harmless, It was funny. Plus the mud felt really really luscious. It would have been incredibly relaxing and sexual if the photographer hadn't been there yelling, "Straddle him! Straddle him!"

Anyways, although the mud ended up dying my hair brown, it was all worth it. I had mud in my ears, in my eyes, in my crotch and a hundred bucks in my pocket. And a boyfriend who would play Neanderthal with me in a pit full of sludge. What more could a strapping girl need?

"I wanted to get some shots



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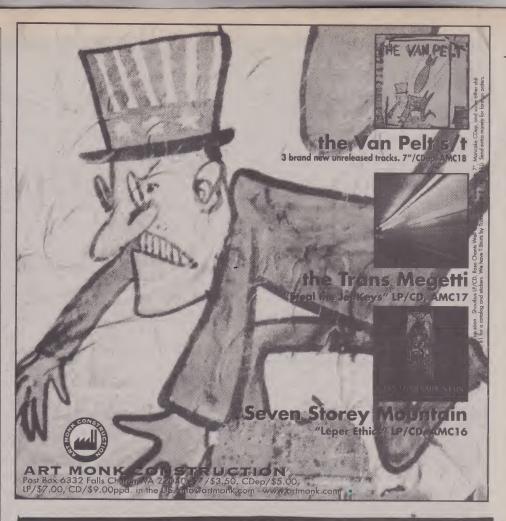
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"It's just the same old show, on my radio"

-The Selector "On My Radio"

"The radio sucks!" It's a common complaint from punk types everywhere. It rings especially true here in the good ol' U.S. of A where if you turn on your radio at virtually any time of the day to any station on the dial, you are practically guaranteed to hear one of three things: inane, prepackaged pop or country music; droning right-wing talk show hosts, or fundamentalist Christian programming.

However, there is an exotic land lurking above the AM band of the standard transistor radio. A land known as shortwave radio. It offers programming that is interesting, educational, entertaining or just plain bizarre—the possibilities are almost limitless. All it takes is a small investment and a desire to hear something new.

In the pre-television era, the radio was the great communications equalizer. The relatively low price of a mass produced transistor would guarantee that virtually anyone could get up-to-date news, music, and entertainment. In the early part of the century, you would have been hard pressed to find a house in this country that did not contain at least one radio. Radio fostered a sense of national community—entire families would gather around the radio to hear F.D.R.'s famous "fireside chats," catch the play-by-play of a sporting event, or be entertained by the comedy of Burns and Allen or Abbott and Costello.

The post-World War II rise of the television severely reduced the role of radio in American life. However, despite TV's continued dominance as well as the introduction of e-mail and the web, radio continues to garner millions of loyal listeners. Unfortunately, much like all other forms of mass media in this country, radio is no

longer a gathering place for people of all persuasions or a source for pertinent information. It has become a garbage heap gathering place for top-40 fans and right-wing politicos. Or has it?

The standard unit for determining the location of a station on the radio dial is the Kilohertz (kHz or kilocycles/second). The spectrum of radio waves is generally divided into three main groups (longwave, mediumwave, and shortwave). The Longwave domain consists of the 148.5-283.5 kHz portion of the radio spectrum. This area is used in Europe for domestic broadcasting, and for governmental or emergency broadcasting in the U.S. The mediumwave (or AM band) is what is heard on the average radio receiver. It occupies the region between 530-1705 kHz in the Western Hemisphere, and is the home to all those boring domestic AM stations in the U.S. The shortwave spectrum (or High Frequency) occupies the area of 2,000-30,000 kHz. Most actual radio stations in the shortwave band operate between 2,300 and 26,100 kHz., with the rest of the spectrum being used by ham radio operators.

OK, this all sounds pretty boring so far, why would you possibly have any interest in shortwave broadcasting? The answer is simple: It is the last bastion of independent and interesting programming flowing through the air. It doesn't take much to be able to hear radio stations from all over the planet. English language programming can be heard originating from Austria, England, Vietnam, Cuba, Czech Republic, China, Canada, Bulgaria, Spain, Russia, Romania, Japan, Italy, Germany, and many, many more. These stations broadcast daily and they are all clearly heard in most areas of the United States.

R

All these stations offer news from the perspective of their own country, most without the pressure from outside sources such as advertisers or governmental broadcasting agencies. Radio For Peace International in Costa Rica features news and analysis from a left perspective, and they present consistently informative feature programs. I've recently heard features on Mumia Abu Jamal, pirate radio stations in the U.S., and an installment of Food Not Bombs radio. Radio Havana Cuba has an interesting take on world events, as well as some really cool Cuban flavored music, and a great show about the technical aspects of radio called DXers unlimited. The Canadian Broadcasting Corp. has a program called Quirks and Quarks, which is a program that covers scientific and technological topics in a fresh and original manner. This is just the tip of the iceberg.

Aside from programs from traditional and officially licensed stations, a large number of pirate operators broadcast on the shortwave spectrum. These stations usually operate via low power transmitters, and under great threat of governmental sanction. As a result, they tend to broadcast using irregular schedules and keep their on-air time to a minimum. Virtually all pirates broadcast in, the area of 6955 kHz, usually on weekends or holidays. Pirate radio activity has been on the increase, and with a little luck, you can hear one.

Pirates offer some of the most original stuff you will ever hear over the radio. Most shortwave pirate radio stations feature music that cannot be heard on commercial radio or hilarious skits and comedy bits. With the increased national exposure of FM pirates such as Radio Free Berkeley and the availability of relatively affordable transmitter kits, these stations have become more and more prevalent. FM stations usually operate with the use of "micro-watt" transmitters (the FCC does not license stations broadcasting with fewer than 100 watts), and are therefore heard in a rather finite area. However, the general quality of programming makes it well worth it to seek out that pirate station broadcasting near you.

Alright, so shortwave sounds interesting, but will it cost your firstborn to get into it? Not necessarily. Shortwave radios come in three basic categories.

Tabletop models are the Cadillacs of shortwave, and are basically intended for the <u>serious</u> enthusiast. They offer incredible bandwidth flexibility and superior audio quality, but most tabletop models are incredibly expensive (between \$1,000 and \$6,500).

Laptop radios still offer outstanding reception and audio, but without the huge cost (between \$250 and \$600 for a good one). With most laptop models, you can pick up most world band stations with the use of the built in antennae, meaning you won't have to invest in materials to build an external (outdoor) antennae. There are a number of companies which manufacture laptop radios: Sangean, Grundig, and Sony (if you can get past the evil corporate name) all manufacture outstanding receivers.

The third designation of radio is the **pocket portable**. These are what the name suggests, pocket-sized radios. Despite the lack of trimmings you get with a laptop unit, portables still do a decent job of picking up most signals. They are also the most affordable of the three styles (some as cheap as \$50).

If you're interested in checking out shortwave, your local electronics store is likely to carry at least one model of radio. There are also a number of independent stores which offer affordable mail order and a tremendous catalog of radios. Most notable are Universal Radio in Reynoldeburg, OH and Grove Electronics in North Carolina. Head out to your local magazine rack for the latest *Monitoring Times* or *Popular Communications* for contact addresses. With surprisingly little effort, access to a whole new wealth of information can be had courtesy of shortwave radio.

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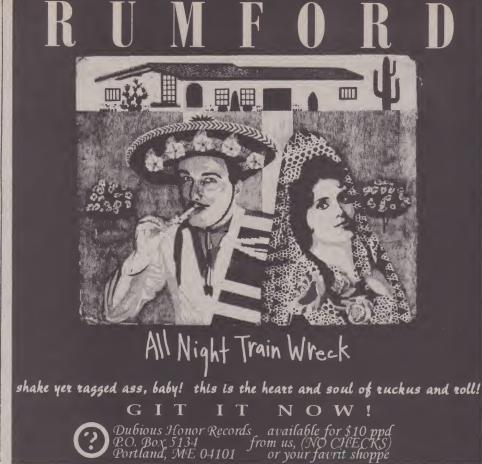
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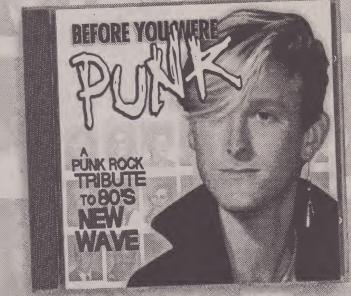
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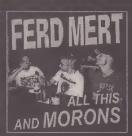
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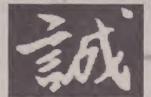
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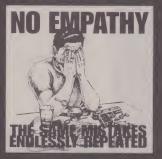
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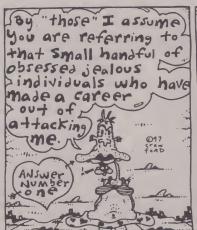


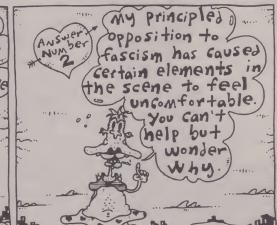
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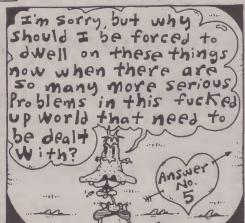
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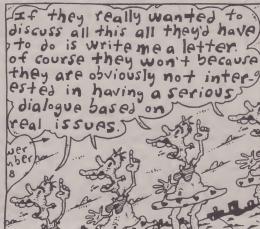




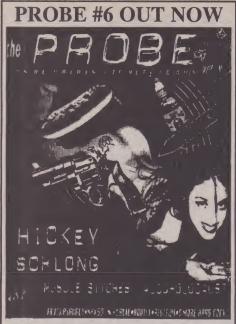












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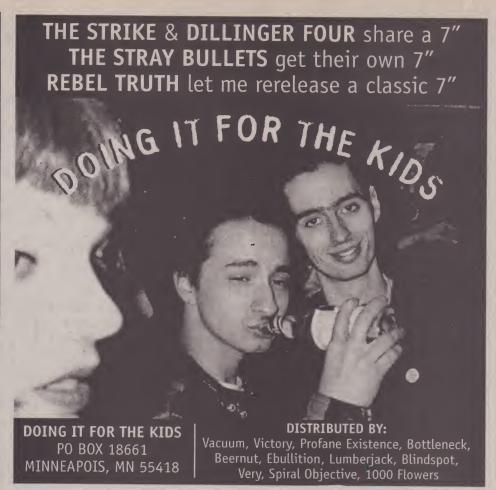
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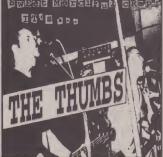


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88 Fingers Louie—88 Fingers Up Your Ass. CD

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Testosterone aplenty. (MD)
Hopeless Records, PO box 7495, Van Nuys, CA 91409-7495

400 Years / Sleepytime Trio-split, 7"

Two trailblazing hardcore bands on one record almost guarantees a great record, right? Unfortunately, the slightly-muddy sound quality on the 400 Years side and the crappy record cover and packing keep this from being great — however, it firmly qualifies as good. 400 Years play powerful, tight hardcore with excellent songs and musicianship. The best part about 400 Years is they have a lead vocalist who screams, and another guy who sings behind it, giving a rough-and-smooth layered effect to the vocals. Sleepytime Trio get really noisy in parts and keep the tempo moving right along, while still providing a powerful song. Both of these bands are exsomethings — 400 Years has a guy from Groundwork and Sleepytime Trio is ex-Maxmillion Colby. You can hear bits of those bands shining through in these songs, but the new bands are better than the old, which is encouraging. (SM)

Smooth Lips Record Co., PO Box 165736, Miami, FL 33116-5736

1313 Mockingbird Lane-Problems, 7"

60's style punkers covering old stuff from Schenectady, NY — the Electric City of all places! (Unless of course these guys are being pranksters.....) This is organ punk if you catch my drift. (GG)

Cacophone Records (See Gremmies review)

7000 Dying Rats / Chelsea's Gone Under, Split 7"

OK, Hockey season is over so what are you going to do now? Be nostalgic. 7000 Dying Rats give you "2 Minutes for Cross Checking" on this split offering their brand of eccentric tune-age. One second it is metal, then it might go to lounge music, it's always a good time. One of Detroit's finest and better then Anal Cunt. The Chelsea's Gone Under side is improvised space music and you don't have to listen to it to enjoy this record. (SY) (Cascade Records, PO Box 1910, Royal Oak, MI 48068-1910)

Abusers-S/T. 7"

The Meatmen meet the Screaming Trees meet earlier Sub Pop. If that doesn't make sense to you, then good because it doesn't make sense to me/ I do like this single though it lost its staying power. Worth a couple rotations. Better than 95% of the stuff out there. (EA)

Demolition Derby!/Nitro c/o Kris Verreth, Tervuursestwg 217, 1820 Perk, Belgium

Across the Border–Crusty Folk Music for Smelly People, CD

Germans singing polka-flavored folk rock with punk influence thrown in for good measure. I kind of liked it, even though it did make me feel like eating a sausage with every song (DC)

Wolverine Records, Benrather Schlossufer 63, 40593 Dusseldorf, Germany

Aina-Sevens, LP

A Jawbreaker-ish feel comes to mind while listening to this poppy indie-rock album. Man, I have to tell Eric to stop sending me stuff like this because I don't listen to anything that even remotely resembles this so I have nothing to compare it to. Midtempo, sort of clean sounding guitars, simple rhythmic bass lines, and Blake Schwarzenbach type vocals sound bland and uninspired to me but then again, I really hate this kind of music so I am probably not the best judge of it. (KB)

B-Core Disc PO Box 35.221 08080 Barcelona, Spain

Antiseen-Masters of the Sky, 7"

Never liked this band and I never will. I will admit to listening to that LP of theirs that came out a while ago, called "Honor Among Thieves" or thereabouts. But on the whole, they suck. The kind of "punk" band that listened to way too much Motorhead and sniffed too much propane or something. Hillbilly punk in the worst way. (GG) Pits Bull Records Tervuursesteenweg 1H, 1820 Perk, Belgium

Auntie Christ-Life Could be a Dream, CD

To say this sounded like X mixed with Rancid would be stupid, because this has Exene and Matt Freeman in the band. I don't know this sounds like Exene said, "Hmmmm... I need to get one of those mohawked boys that the kids love, and put out some of these songs that are even too stupid for John Doe". Do yourself a favor and get the first two X LPs and cut that mohawk cause this is the most orchestrated, well produced piece of music I have heard to pass itself of as punk. (EA)

The Authorities-Puppy Love, LP

Another reissue of 14 tunes of raw punk rock from two different sessions; one from 1982, the other from 1983. Very cool songs dealing with everything from the draft to cops to suicide. Very typical but very cool for the time; where were you in '82? If you don't recall these guys it is time to pick up this disc. (NW)

Get Hip PO Box 666 Cannonsburg, PA 15317

The Automatics-20 Golden Greats!, CD

"10 Golden Greats" + "10 more Golden Greats" make up the recipe for this new Automatics CD. So, if you have the two aforementioned EPs than you probably do not need this CD (unless, of course, you crave that CD quality). "20 Golden Greats" contains snotty, poppy sensibilities that all the kids love to dance to. A fine addition to the record collection of the fan and the fan-to-be alike. (MD)

Mulant Pop Records, 5010 NW Shasta, Corvallis, OR, 97330

The B-Movie Rats-Teenage Queen, 7"

A band that does it all but rock. Recorded way too cleanly for their sound, but still recorded poorly. The drums sound ridiculous in the mix — hard to explain but if you hear this you'll understand. They obviously are going for the Crypt-like raunch and swagger but fail in execution. Their influences are impeccable though, and bode well for this bands future, given the proper recording environment — they pay respects to everyone from Kiss to the Devil Dogs to the Problematics and the Chinese Millionaires, along with '57 Chevys and Ed Wood. (GG)

Dead Beat Records PO Box 283 Los Angeles, CA 90078

Ballgagger-Ache, CD

Sometimes remind me of Tsunami meets Red Aunts and Sebadoh. I don't know, the quirkiness of the gruff lead vocals and very melodic background vocals make this a winner. If you dig above bands in any capacity here is a surprise pick of the month. Nice production keeps this CD afloat in a sea of shit. (EA)

Theologian Records PO Box 1070 Hermosa Beach, CA 90254

Bantam Rooster-Watch me Burn, 7"

Some adages can be true. Bantam Rooster proves one — less can be more. Two guys churn out hot minimalist punkers that the Childish fans would go apeshit for. Cool shit. (GG)

Flying Bomb PO Box 971038 Ypsilanti, MI 48197

Darren Cahr (DC), Eric Action (EA), Gree Gartland (GG),
Joan Pixie (JP), Kim Bae (KB),
Ken Snaderson (KS), Marie
Davenport (MD), Mark Hanford
(MH), Nate Wilson (NW),
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Sinker (DS), Scott Vahtzee (SV)

Bastard-No Hope In Here, CD

Holy Cow! Like being pummeled over the head with a blunt heavy object, taking a DISCHARGE wall-of-guitar styling and completely pushing it to it's limit. Tokyo's BASTARD work way beyond the level of "Dis-Core", overpowering with riffs, Headdetonating Japanese-style metal solos, growled Shouts, and snappy, boisterous rhythms. This 16-song CD fends off the inevitable bootleg (!) by collecting their 12", extremely rare 7", appearance on the "Triple Cross Counter" Compilation E.P. and an unreleased track. Three of the members are now teamed with Muka-chin, Ace drummer of the defunct and Mighty DEATHSIDE in JUDGE-MENT, who's output is similarly unbelievable. (KS) Bastard Records, No address, JAPAN

Beltaine-two song, 7"

Fairly serious-sounding melodic hardcore with vocals that jump back and forth from being sung to being screamed. Interesting songs, played with some energy. Nice packaging, too. A good record. (SM)

Atomic Action! Records, 2030 West Main Road, Middletown, RI 02482

Better Than Your Hand-Where's Pete, 7"

Sounds a lot like Naked Aggression, but instead of stupid political lyrics Better Than Your Hand have stupid angry lyrics. The female vocals are nice and you can feel the heart and aggression that makes punk = punk. No wimpy stuff here. Probably too hard for most folks. (EA)

Probe Records PO Box 5068 Pleasant, CA 94566

Bigwig-Unmarred Melodies, CD

Standard-issue melodic hardcore that is very high quality but sounds like so many other bands with that fast HC sound. The one thing that makes Bigwig stand out over many of the others are intelligent lyrics about junkies, the religious right, and date rape. There are also songs here about girls and relationships. Enjoyable, though not essential.

Featless Records 13772 Goldenwest St. #545 Westminster CA 92683

Blank, 7"

Melodic hardcore that is a bit slower than the rest.
Not horrible, but nothing exciting. (MD)
Reptilian Records, 406 S. Broadway, Baltimore, MD
21231

Blaster the Rocketboy–Succulent Space Food for Teething Vampires, LP

This is fucking weird. Combine one of those old LA-style punk bands, the kind that snarl a lot, with one of those tame Lookout! bands from a few years back, like Brent's TV, and put at least one certifiable lunatic in the band, and there ya go. This is very reminiscent of old new wave/punk, but not by any means an imitation ... it's just too bizarre. Unfortunately, this band can't have the kind of flush-it-all cynicism that made those old punk bands so great because they're Christian. But the record is good. (SM)

Boot to Head Records, PO Box 9005, Portland, OR 97207

Blew-LP

Japanese pop punk that's surprisingly done well, totally California sounding. I would never guess these guys were from Japan. Good production. (NW)

Snuffy Smile 4-244 302 Daizawa Setagata Tokyo, Japan

Blew/Chopper, split 7"

Punk rock from England and Japan. Totally great. There is little I can say other than you should buy this today because you will be sad if you don't. Really. (MD)

Crackle, PO box HP49, Leeds, LS6 4XL, UK

Blood-Gin-Everybody's Punk Rock, 7"

I am at a loss for words? Punk/Rockabilly/lounge, maybe? I don't know...I do know it's really fast and kind of harsh to listen to because it just doesn't sound...right. Ever have that happen? (JP) V.M.L. POB 183 Franklin Park, IL 60131

Blount-Trauma, LP

This is pretty good, tight, fast melodic punk very much in the vein of Propagandhi but with more harmonies and backups. The vocals are more anthemic and less snotty than Propagandhi (for some reason I'm thinking of a mix between the singers from Less Than Jake and Face to Face) but damn do the music and melody sound like them. The lyrics aren't terribly generic although many have this gen X slant (all I do is smoke pot and watch t.v., I'm a loser, etc.) while one song claims I'm not a part of generation X" which was a little confusing. I only listened to this one and a half times but I can tell it's going to be a keeper. The production is pretty good and the songs well-written and fuck, I love Propagandhi (if only the lyrics were as good...). (KB)

Fearless Records 13772 Goldenwest St. #545 Westminster, CA 92683

Bluebird-s/t, 7"

Well, it says the songs were written and recorded two weeks after the band formed. I'm not sure if that's an apology or gloating on the part of the band. Ultimately, I think they should have waited and they might have had a great 7:" on their hands, instead of a passably good one. Both songs are boring and don't sound like the same band. I halfway think this might be a split 7", but there is no info as to who the other band is. Oh well. (IP)

PO Box 3673 So Pasadena, Ca 91031

The Bomboras-It Came From Pier 12,

Boring instro surf shit. For this month buy the Les Vice Barons disc. It is ten times more on than this. Ouch, the jerks even cut out the bar code to keep us from selling it (or reviewing it). (EA)

Dionysis PO Box 1975 Burbank, CA 91507

Brick -1-sided, 7"

Remedial but spirited thrashing from Austin. It all shuffles along well enough until it all completely crashes down with an avalanche of power and intensity with "Gut Influence". Slow, dirgey and plodding in the right way. The remaining tracks of pop'n' serve powerviolence can't touch that. "I am Nothing, I have Nothing" Seven tracks, 1-side with a big bloody brick on the cover!! (KS)

Little Deputy Records, PO box 7066, Austin, TX 78713-7066

The Bristles-Last Year's Youth, LP

You know that "get drunk, smash shit and pogo" genre of punk rock? The one that lost its shock value about 18 years ago and is now just kinda pesky? Well, here's a whole LP of it. With snotty vocals, last names like "Obnoxious," and mid-tempo songs like "God Fuck America," The Bristles are firmly planted in that genre. I could do without it, but if it's your thing, well, just don't puke on me while you're listing to this. (SM)

Beer City Records, PO Box 26035, Milwaukee, WI 53226-0035

The Bristles / Working Stiffs-split. 7"

The Bristles are a popular lot lately. They got that crew mixed with oi sound that captures many audience types. They even through in a Screeching Weasel sounding riff into a song. Get out your boots, we are a moshing here tonight (remember clockwise in the N. Hemisphere). The Working Stiffs had hard

to hear vocals, I wish I could hear what they are saying. Very British, very straight up punk rock. A nice little single that didn't go unnoticed. (EA)

Beer City Records PO Box 26035, Milwaukee, WI 53226-0035

Bushfire-s/t, 7"

Hmmmm... I like it, yet I don't. It's run of the mill, yet energetic. It's something I've heard before, yet I know I haven't. I can honestly see a lot of people liking this band, though that doesn't mean it does anything for me personally, probably because they sound like every other hardcore band out there and aren't really trying to do anything original. It left me kind of blah. (JP)
Short Egg records Mainzerstr.37 66111
Saabrticken Germany

Cash Money-Black Hearts..., LP

God awful, pretentious rockabilly that should be shoved down the toilet. Didn't Touch and Go used to put out hardcore?!? What the fuck happened to those days? (NW)

Touch and Go

Castor-Carnival, 7"

Wow, the cover of this attractive 7" is printed on felt. Nice touch! Musically, Castor bears a passing resemblance to the Promise Ring—especially vocally—but without the innate ability to create really catchy hooks like the 'Ring can. (DS)

Mud Records 905 S. Lynn St. Urbana IL 61801

The Chinese Millionaires—"This is the Criminal Element" 7"

The Millionaires finally see colored vinyl on a 7" with a Sex Pistols track among 3 other covers. As always, good shit and an essential record in my book, but to be honest, their original songs are better — songs written especially for their sloppy yet deceivingly tight style are way satisfying. Look for a Rip Off LP real soon, as well as the repress of the their first EP reviewed next....(GG)

Demolition Derby (see Grey Spikes review for address)

Chinese Millionaires–White Collar Criminal, 7"

Johnny come latelys despair no more, one of the best records of recent memory has seen a second pressing. The initial 600 of this tight as hell garage jem flew off the shelves, and has not been seen at all since then — except on the want list of many a folk caught by surprise by this juggernaut. Get this shit now. (GG)

Demolition Derby

Chisel-Set You Free, CD

This is an excellent pop record. Chisel are Squeeze for the 90s. Hooky pop sensibilities, but with enough distortion, power, and feedback to keep the music from getting stale. Recommended, especially for fans of late 70s / early 80s new wave pop. (MH)

Gerh Blandsten PO Box 356 River Edge NJ 07661

Chisel-No title, 7"

Man, I am really unsure how to describe this. I can't place this in any punk subgenre - it doesn't remotely resemble anything punk music-wise but it's not exactly strictly indie rock either. It makes me picture a middle-aged guy with curly hair clutching a microphone shaking his head around like Sammy Hagar. At times it's like light rock adult contemporary at other times totally indescribable and quirky. Heavy on the treble side, early 70s rock maybe? I just don't fucking know. (KB)

Gern Blandsten PO Box 356 River Edge, NJ 07661

The Chubbies-Tres Flores, CD

This is one the few CDs that will get a short review. If you enjoy Sympathy brand of watered down female-vocalized punk rock then you will love this. Sounds like a bad review, but it isn't. In fact I like it a lot. You just have to be in the right mood, for this kind of stuff. (EA)

Sympathy for The Record Industry

Clarks Ditch-Trafal Ga Moron, LP

Pop punk music with vocals that remind me of Geddy Lee of Rush. I'm always turned off when there is no lyric sheet enclosed, but I give points for sounding like Rush and bringing me back to my youth. (NW)

No address

Clikatat Ikatowi-August 29+30 1995, LP

This album captures the live madness of Clitkatat Ikatowi perfectly. I was expecting this record to sound like shit, considering how much chaos and noise was at the two Clikatat shows I witnessed (including, perhaps, the one documented on this album, as it's recorded in Chicago in '95). Clikatat was one of the great bands of the Gravity Records heyday. They were loud, chaotic, well dressed and pretentious and we liked it that way.(DS)

Gravity Records PO Box 81332 San Diego CA 92136

Colossamite-All Lingo's Clamour, CD

Bastro wannabees, without interesting songs.

Neither innovative enough rhythmically to pull it off, nor musically interesting enough to make you want to listen to it more than once. (DC)

Skin Graft, PO Box 257546, Chicago, IL 60625

Compound Red/Loomis, split 7"

Loomis used to be Sandbox. Compound Red sounds like Loomis. Read the Loomis "Planes Vs tanks..." 7" review for further detail. (MD)
Loomadardi Recording Co., PO box 2564, Madison, WI,

53701-2564

The Criminals-Never Been Caught, CD

Too bad a top ten of all time band used the title
"Never Been Caught" before. They were even from
the same county (idiots). That aside, with the lost
of the dual girl/boy vocals the Criminals do little
for me. I have always liked Jesse's vocals, but with
the remake of "Parlez-Vouz fuk You?" you miss the
female contrast. Still a good recording and HC
with that pop feel. (EA)

Lookout Records

Curll/Castles and Car Wrecks-split 7"

I had the Curll side on 45 by accident and liked it better that way. Now it's just slow and booooring. Castles and Car Wrecks, with their acoustic guitars and simple vocals fares much better—in fact, the Castles and Car Wrecks song is downright beautiful (DS)

Class Records 5 Paterson Terrace East Kilbride Glasgow G75 0BA

Cypher in the Snow-S/T, LP

Okay, this easily goes down as the strangest record I've heard all year. Opera & punk collide in a cacophony of horn bleats, drum beats, and everything else you can throw onto a record. I couldn't listen to it but I've gotta respect it 'cause nobody sounds like Cypher in the Snow. Is that good or bad... you decide. (DS)

Candyass Records PO Box 42382 Portland, OR 97242

Dagobah-s/t, CD

I usually have an allergic reaction to bands that lift their name from Star Wars, but I'll cut Dagobah some slack 'cause they're pretty good. Dagobah stays within familiar territory, playing the now-ubiquitous quiet-loud-soft-heavy math rock inspired brand of emo, but they play it well. (DS) Sampson Regords 105 Borden Rd. Tiverton RI 02878



God awful, pretentious rockabilly that should be shoved down the toilet.

The Daisies-Mom Burns Big Bucks, LP

The Daisies play that melodic So. Cal. sound badly. A comparison to Pennywise comes to mind — I don't like that band either. The vocals are bland and they throw in tasteless guitar solos. For just a secand I thought they had one catchy, enjoyable song, but then they ruined it by throwing in a ska part. Yucko, (SM)

Wolverine records, Benrather SchloBufer 63, 40593 Dusseldorf, Germany

Dancing French Liberals of '48-Ain't Got a Prayer

The music from this band is great, rocking punk with no frills. The vocal style is not much to my iking, being high pitched and over melodic. Four songs recorded by Slayer Hippie. Fast and melodic stuff. (NW)

Panic Records, no address

Darien-Greg Nasty, 7"

Apparently this has some ex-members of Serpico on it. That probably explains why this reminds me of either Dag Nasty or Down By Law, cuz Serpico always sounded like that to me. Needless to say, then, that this is a highly enjoyable punk pop record with melodic guitars and emo vocals. Way cool. (MH) Darien 142 Penn Ave. SI, NY 10306

Dawnbreed-s/t, CD

Annoying, decadent German noise-rock that fails miserably at every pretentious move it makes. (DS) Trans Solar Bismarckstrasse 6 56068 Koblenz

The Delinquents-All Fired Up, LP

Generic punk rock with some melodic bits and woah's here and there. A few poppy numbers that are decent, but this is mostly straightforward punk — a style done better by Youth Brigade years ago. (SM) Cravedog Records/Reject Records, no address

Demolition Doll Rods-Tasty, CD

Finally a full copy of this disc. Great from the artwork to the production. Everyone knows that all girl bands are cooler than a mixed band. So what does Demolition Doll Rods do, dress the man in drag. In case you don't know this has ex-Gories axeman and that is enough to buy this alone. I think that the single is this bands format, so thanks for the shorter album. If you haven't seen em live then you are missing a treat. It would be a gimmick to see these ladies and fella almost bare naked, but after awhile you forget and just realize that this is the way they do it. Another words the music lives up to the gimmick. Production by Mick Collins and Jon Spencer make this a blaster in your stereo. (EA) In The Red Records 2627 E. Strong Pl., Anaheim CA 92806

The Despised-Music to Drive by... 7"

Totally filled with hate. Nothing greatly offensive. 4 songs played in your Negative Approach styling of punk rock. The serious anger of the lyrics come off as being comical to me. The best line on the whole record has to be, "Never trust a hippie and you'll vin." (SY)

(G.M.M. PO Box 15234, Atlanta, GA 30333)

D.F.L.-Grateful, LP

Sloppy power chord punk at times sounding like Angry Samoans, at times sounding like that opening band in every town that plays crappy punk rock but entertains the audience with its crazy stage antics and humor. The packaging is pretty fucking funny. There is no list of songs and according to my CD player, there is only one 25 minute long song on the disc. From what I've heard, this band has some affiliation with the Beastie Boys besides having been on their label, Grand Royal. Hm, definitev a novelty. (KB)

Epitaph 2798 Sunset Blvd Los Angeles, CA 90026

Dicks-1980-1986, CD

will admit I only owned the Dicks split with the Big Boys and though it was a keeper and a heavyveight of early 80s Punk Rock I never located any other vinyl (besides a comp or two, Rat Music ex.). Fuck, I was a stupid boy back then. This takes emo, art rock, geek core, math rock, etc. and shoves it onto the radio. The Dicks hold the Heavyweight Belt over their heads and challenge the world against the whole motherfuckin' state of Texas. (EA)

Alternative Tentacles find it at Wal Mart

Dirge-The Impossible Sit Up, CD

This CD gets the grunge rock meets heavy metal award. Six tracks, nothing stands out whatsoever. Oh well, what can you do? (JP)

PO Box 291 Mooloolaba 4557

Dis/Panel Donor-split, 7"

The Dis side of this 7" starts out really promising, quiet with hushed vocals over it, but when it kicks in; it's killed by the muffled production—ironic because it's recorded by Mr. Production himself, Steve Albini. Can't hand the quiet/loud mix, Steve? Panel Donor's side, recorded in a basement on an 8-track sounds better, but unfortunately, the band's worse. PD plays a really syncopated upbeat rock that by the time it breaks it down into a slow groove, has already lost the battle. (DS) Lombardi PO Box2564 Madison, WI 53701-2564

Disciple-Scarap, 7"

Total guitar heavy moshcore that reeks of more a metal influence than hardcore. Vocal style is rough and screechy. The lyrics are terrible and seem to have a pro- Christian slant to them. (NW)

SA Mob PO Box 1931 Erie PA 16507

Disco Crisis/The Cancerous Reagans-split, 7"

Ooh... I like Disco Crisis a lot. very reminiscent of Blatz- screamy girl vocals with angry male vocals make it forceful and truly punk as anything you'll ever hear. This is a band I'll definitely be looking for more music from in the future. The Cancerous Reagans play simlar powerful punk rock that would make you want to spit or something. very cool record. I'll be listening to it again. (JP)

CI Records 739 Manor Street Lancaster, PA 17608

Discount-Her Last Day, 7"

Sexism is weird. By all accounts this band is good, solid pop punk, and usually I would write just that. But since the singer happens to be female, I feel compelled to call Discount "good female fronted pop punk." I know it sucks and when I think about it I feel dirty, but that's the way it is. Regardless, this is good, and sounds akin to Tilt but more earnest. (GG)

Panic Records via Helter Skelter- Via Degli Ausoni 84-00185 Roma

Doctor Explosion-Maximum Rhythm & Shit, 7"

Great stuff, a Spanish Makers. Four rocking tunes that you will listen to again. With a big package form Demolition Derby, this was the winner. Now I like more than three or four bands from Spain (what the hell has happened to Punk Rock and Roll) (EA)

Demolition Derby! c/o Kris Verreth, Tervuursestwg 217, 1820 Perk, Belgium

The Drapes-The Silent War..., CD

Power punk. Distortion. A driving beat. Testosterone aplenty. (MD) One Foot Records, PO Box 3834, Cherry Hill, NJ, 08034-0592

Drunk in Public-Tapped Out!, CD

ve decided that melodic hardcore is to the 90s what generic thrash was to the 80s. Every band seems to have the exact same formula - fast guitars, thumpa thumpa drums, melodic and metallic guitar leads, and lyrics

The only thing that I can count on month in and month out is a Ramones knock-off band.

about girls. Don't get me wrong... DiP are good at what they do (I even jumped around the room a little bit while this was on)... I just wish everyone else weren't doing the same fucking thing. (MH)

Fearless Records 13772 Goldenwest St. #545 Westminster CA 92683

The Dukes of Hamburg-Star Club Show 1, LP

Lotsa fast R & B driven by the man of beat,
Russel Quan (ex-Mummies). You would be an
idiot if you didn't pick this one up right away.
It is like the Mummies are back. Oh Yeah,
you are still an idiot if you buy this, only an
idiot with a better record collection. (EA)
Diohysis PO Box 1975 Burbank, CA 91507

Dulac Swade-?

Heavy guitar, screaming vocals, metallic guitar meandering and a heavy groove all combine to make this a winner. Reminds me of the good metal/HC crossover bands of the early 80s.

Almost like later Black Flag at times. I hope to hear some more soon. (MH)

8013 Records 5833 S. Clairborne New Orleans LA 70125

Electric Frankenstein-Sick Songs, CD

Electric Frankenstein have been delivering quite a while now and rarely disappoint. This is a heavy album and you would be an idiot not to see the Detroit and New York 70s influences in this one. This is their best line up and I suggest you pick this one up and throw away your Lookout collection, because it will have little use to you anymore. We are proud to share this world we call punk rock with you. (EA)

Kaco Records 21000 Boca Riop Road A-15 Boca Raton, FL 33433

Evolved to Obliteration-Fission, 7"

Throttled Disjointed Pummeling of Slow and fast covered in SIEGE-styled growl'n'scowl vocals. Stop'n'start, quick thrash bursts bookended by slow dirge or churning mid-tempo. One of the better "South Bay" bands (uh...San Francisco Bay, that is...), Sadly defunct. 8 Songs, originally released a few years back and brought back to you now on Gray Vinyl By.... (KS)

Clean Plate Records, PO Box 709, Hampshire College, Amherst, MA. 01002

Fabric-S/T, LP

Compiles a layered Emo-Downbeat UK hardcore bands' demo recordings, recorded live at the infamous "Toe Rag" studios. Toe Rag has recorded some awesome raw garage records but here the layers of guitar, their intricacies, the spoken vocals that tear to impassioned shouts, the quiet, soft parts that overflow to loud noise all suffer from "set-up and play" budget recording method. These Eleven tracks largely became part of a later LP "Body Of Water", which is probably a monolith of the Post-DISCHORD style, because the materials strong and does manage to wade through the adverse recording conditions. A keeper for fans of the style and band. (KS)

Simba Recordings, 30 Park View Avenue, Leeds, LS4 2LW ENGLAND

Falsies/Turdz-split, 7"

It's remarkable really. The only thing that I can count on month in and month out is a Ramones knock-off band. Usually they suck. (Actually I can't think of even one good one.) This time its the Turdz. Lame ass Ramones posturing. Bad! The flip is the Falsies, which is equally godawful in its "HCness." My best description would be a castrated Black Flag. The sleeve is a good example of computers run amok with horribly pixelated scanned photos and words that blend into the background. Naughty! (GG)

Imperfekt Records PO Box 2846 Columbia, MD 21045

The Fantastics-Stick This Up Your Retro Ass, 7"

Fast melodic punk with vocals that follow the guitar line which is pretty boring at times. It sounds kind of like Weird Al is singing. This is pretty good except there are some really long-ass musical interludes (not guitar solos but intros and breaks in singing) that just drag on and on. The last song is a crappy 50s love song sounding ditty. What is really perplexing is the song titles on the labels on the record itself match the titles on the lyric sheet but the lyrics do not at all resemble what is actually being sung. I am totally puzzled (not amused) by this and so is a friend that is listening to this with me. Weird, very strange, don't get it. (KB)
Sinister Label PO Box 1045 La Grange, IL 60526

The Feds-Classified, 7"

Some pretty raging hardcore from these
Chicagoans. Melodic guitar breaks, thumpa
thumpa thumpa drums, solid bass and excellent
vocals make this a nice little punk rock record.
Limited edition creamy orange vinyl. (MH)
Dr. Strange PO Box 7000-117 Alta Loma CA 91701

The F.i.d.'s-Learn a Fourth Chord, 7" EP

Goofy punk with buzzsaw guitars and stoopid lyrics. There are three good songs on here, and the rest is live stuff that isn't really exciting or interesting to listen to. Out of the three songs, only one (I Don't Wanna Sandwich) is really outstanding. Tape this from a friend. (MH)

Owen Records 47 Waldo St. Pawtucket RI 02860

Figure Eight-Jesus Loves You, 7"

Power punk with scratchy vocals, distortion, and a driving beat. If you like that you will like this. (MD)
Slow Gun Records, 1760 Blue Mountain Dr., Yorba
Linga, CA 92886

Film Star LP

An obscure release right down to the insert, which includes little more than pictures of the musicians' instruments. The vocals go everywhere from high-pitched nasal to electronically distorted, the music is sometimes smooth occasionally rough, with clever use of a keyboard and strange sounds. Mix Phleg Camp with Pavement and throw in a keyboard. Not bad, but not something that I'll listen to much. (SM)

Super Cottonmouth Records, PO Box 480555, Los Angeles, CA 90048

Flatus-Aural Fixation, CD

Melodic, poppy, distortion laden punk with slightly Squirtgun sounding vocals. Not bad but nothing new. (MD)

Black Pumpkin Records, PO Box 4377, River Edge, NJ, 07661-4377

Forced Expression/Apartment 213 -split, 7"

Rumbly noise charges on both sides, mired in the basement sound but banging the floorboards with grind-thrash-power-tooled noise. Indiana's FORCED EXPRESSION six tracks screech, scald and halt as per SPAZZ, with goof-core lyrics. While I appreciate the fact that folks fully admit they've got nothing pressing to say...it cheats angry music, the reasoning for the speed, anger gone, cheapening it into a big joke. That doesn't always work for me. APARTMENT 213 toils quicker with a slight metallic edge with brevity (10 Songs! One side!) and squirly gnarled vocals. Purple vinyl. (KS)

Clean Plate Records, P.O.B.. 709, Hampshire College, Amhearst, MA 01002

Freedom Fighters- Bell Or Bat, 7"

Hello? Nîrvana in the house? I thought Kurt ... oh, never mind. Freedom Fighters? Foo Fighters, anyone? Yeech. (JP)

Meat Records PO Box 10203 Fargo, ND 58106

Fuckface-Don't Hate Us 'Cause We're... 7"

Oh god. Vomit-vocals and sloppy guitar work. (DS) Poverty Records 915 Cole Box 115 San Francisco CA 94117

Gameface-Cupcakes, 7"

l like this band a lot, I always have, so this 7" was a real treat. Three fast and pop-perfect songs. A great 7" for people that already like the band, as well as a good starting point for those who haven't heard them yet. (JP)

Doctor Strange Records PO Box 7000-117 Alta Loma, Ca 91701

Gapeseed-s/t, CD

This album looks soooo good. It's all done with pastel markers and really beautiful, fragile line art. It's breathtaking. Luckily, the music lives up to the packaging. Another band in the improv-punk Storm & Stress/Joan of Arc vein, Gapeseed doesn't lay the freak-freak on as thick as the others though. Instead, Gapeseed uses moments of chaos as flavor for their songs, which are great. The song "Real Time Morning" is a small masterpiece. Loud & soft, haunting & upbeat, a really nice record. (DS) Silver Girl PO Box 161024 San Diego, CA 92176

Gauze-Low Charge, 7"

This is one of those records that made my mouth drop the second I put it on. So fast and chaotic I couldn't even follow it the first time. After awhile it all makes sense. Just so many different time changes and stops and starts. It even feels like they skip a beat once in awhile. Apparently this was recorded when Gauze came over from Japan to tour the U.S. last year. The production is awesome. Worth whatever price you have to pay to get it! (SY)

(Prank, PO Box 410892, San Francisco, CA 94141-0892)

Gerling/Gapeseed-split 7"

I've never heard a song start out so promising and then fall apart as quickly as "Mother Mary" on the Gerling side of this split. Jesus, by the time the singer starts yelling "yip yip!" you're just covering your ears and hoping that he will just shut the fuck up. The Gapeseed side is better, but only comparatively, as their singer(s?) is (are?) annoying too, and the tempo changes just don't work. The Gapeseed CD is way way better. (DS)

Stillwater Trading 107 Atlantic Ave. #2, Brooklyn NY 11201

Girl Plunge-S/T, CD

A cool sound...yet not the sound I have would have expected off of Bloodlink Records, a label once specializing in the heaviest sounds of the east coast. Minimal sounds framing around spoken

word and singing. The instrumentation consists of violins and cellos being played in a frantic state. Sometimes the cellos sound like chugging guitars. No, this is not a noise band. The words focus around issues of political and queer topics. This album is a good thing to put in, lay back, and just fisten. (SY)

Bloodlink Records, PO Box 7414, Philadelphia, PA 19101

Global Holocaust-Human Mistakes, 7"

Straight ahead punk played fast & loud with overtly political messages. You know what I'm talkin' about. (DS)

Beer City PO Box 26035 Milwaukee WI 53226-0035

Go Nuts-Worlds Greatest...., CD

This is so silly.... I am not normally really into silliness in my music, but this is good. This is a good CD to throw on when your non-punk friends come over, because they will think it is stupid, and that you are even more stupid. Go nuts, go nuts, go nuts. Great packaging, lotsa theme songs and more on nutrition. Lock your snacks up and listen to this CD, because the Go Nuts are coming to get you. (EA)

Plar et Pimp 1800 Market St. no. 45 San Francisco, CA 94102

The Go Nuts-Robert Earl Hughes, 7"

A wax platter and a band dedicated totally to snacking. Donuts, snack cakes, greasy foods, and the works. Sing along Snak-rock giving 4 songs here that are pretty entertaining. I don't know about the credibility of this band. Judging by the picture on the cover, these medium sized rockers don't look like full-time snackers. (SY)

(Lookout! Records, PO BOX 11374, Berkeley, CA 94712-2374 or www.lookoutrecords.com)

Gosh Darn-Have Band, Will Travel, 7"

Speedy, generic punk rock with sing-song lyrics and tic toc tic toc tic toc drumming. The last song on this 4-song 7" is more interesting musically than the others, but overall I'd say they'll sell most of these to their friends. (MH)

Send in the Clones 8420 Bridle Rd Philadelphia PA 19111

Grayling-s/t, 7"

Fairly poorly produced indie rock from Michigan. Melodic vocals and guitars with some noisy bits and tempo changes thrown in that just make it sound sloppy. (DS)

Bald Bruce Records 43420 Bockley Sterling Heights, MI 48313

The Gremmies-Boss Sound, 7"

Total instro surf from upstate New York, a region I call home. (Go Poughkeepsie!) Cool stuff for fans of Dick Dale, Jackie and the cedrics, or even Man...or Astro Man? (GG) Cacphone Records PO Box 6058 Albany, NY 12206

The Grey Spikes-Thunderation, 7"

R'n'B flavored Crypt type punk, a la the Revelators or a heavily punked out Hifi and the Roadburners. Cool! (GG)

Demolition Derby Tervuursteenweg 1H 1820 Perk Belgium

The Grodes aka The Tongues of Truth-two song, 7"

Let's Talk about Girls.... The Lyres did this song great, Chocolate Watchband did almost as good and The Tongues of Truth did first. An archive worth digging up, indeed. I really think its worth you getting this one. The B-side is a solo song form Manny Fresier of the Grodes and is a little folkier. I suspect with the classic A-side you will never flip this disc anyways. They could have put a Mr. T storybook on the other side and you wouldn't have even known. (EA)

Grovie Ghoulies-Running with Bigfoot and She Hangs Out, 7"

This single came cracked in two pieces from Lookout so here goes what I know (or can read from the label). One song is from their newest LP and one is only from this single. Recorded at Egg Studios so you know it sounds top notch. Why buy a single with one new song (though I assume this came out before the LP) when the Groovie Ghoulies have so much out anyways. For completists only. (EA)

Lookout! Records (the address is tattooed on your back, have your boyfriend read it to you)

Hard Candy-S/T, 7"

Bacchus Archives

Indy rock. Not my thing, but sounded pretty lame. I used to listen to some of this stuff—I was a huge Superchunk, Polvo, and Versus fan once. This record has nothing nearly as redeeming. (GG)

Lunchbox Records PO Box 14877 Atlanta, GA 30324



There is nothing worse than this trend of experimental"

Hardship / Gun Pro-split, 7"

Hardship play noisy punk with crusty vocals bellowing out stupid lyrics. Gun Pro play noisy punk with throaty vocals screaming out really stupid lyrics. Both bands suck. (SM) Stealth Odeal Records, 2825 E. Burnside Box #148, Portland, OR 97214

Hemlock-Give Kids Candy, CD

Moody melodic indie rock with powerful guitars, solid drumming, and well-sung vocals.

This reminds me a lot of Arcwelder or somebody like that. Hemlock is definitely not bad for you (am I clever or what?). (MH)

Liquid Meat Records PO Box 460692

Escondido CA 92046-0692

The Hentchmen-Ten String Trio, 7"

A rare organless release from this 60's inspired punk trio. A legendary live act that I've never dug too much on vinyl, but I have no problem recommending to the Estrus crowd. (GG) Flying Bomb (see Bantam Rooster review)

The Hermits-Chickens, Whips and Rock 'n' Roll, 10"

Strange record. Starts off with a bland instrumental and then bangs into a great song "Surf Fever" plus two other scorchers. Three out of four so far are top notch (not to shabby). Side two picks right up where we left at with a great Vibrators song "Into the Future" (way great here). Their original "Baby let me Bang Your Box". Very, very, recommended. (EA) Paric Records Via Degli Ausoni, 84, 00185 Roma - Italy

Hippriests-Pope on Dope, 7"

Sloppy scummy punk rock from Germany. 4 songs on this 7" with titles like Don't Know Shit and Fucked. Sorta like the Motards, but missing a certain edge. Still, overall a nice fucked up record. Punk rock! (MH)

Anger Factory Odenwaldstrasse 20 12161

Berlin, Germany

Hot Damn-Beaver Shot, 7"

This band didn't do very much for me on their full length I heard some moons back.

This single though is really good. I don't even know how to peg it down. Two covers that sound like they came of my favorite Frolic and Diner LPs. Very fun, the B-side "Take it Off!" makes you wanna move. Don't let the stripper image on the cover fool you (hey it's the band, so is that sexist?). Great music, good packaging and worth your milk money. (EA)

Hum Machine-Heavy Inspection, 7"

A relatively boring hard rock band. These 3 songs recorded live in Detroit. Hey guys, grunge is dead. (MH)

Cancer Records 1127 University Ave. Suite 209
Madison WI 53715

The Huns-Live at the Palladium 1979, LP

Reissue of a classic originally released by Ryan Richardson's Existential Vacuum Records. Old Texas new wave. Not my thing, but it could be yours.... (GG)

Get Hip PO Box 666 Canonsburg, PA 15317

The Hypnomen–Wild Instrumental Masterpieces, 7"

Too slow! Instros from Finland. Great background music, but not the toe tapping, feet dancing instros that I have heard lately. (EA)

Demolition Derby!/Nitro c/o Kris Verreth, Tervuursestwg 217, 1820 Perk, Belgium

The Impossibles-Absolute PO' 100% Go, 7"

Fast and energetic raw punk rock. Definitely something I could get into and would like to see playing a show. I'd imagine they'd have a huge following in their hometown, the kind of band few people know about, but a lot of people would like. Worth checking out. (JP)

Social retardance records PO Box 25666 Tempe, Arizona, 85285-5666

Indecision/Sons of Abraham, split 7"

The Sons of Abraham tune is dirgy, almost midtempo metal with double-bass drum and whiny REAHR! guitar riffs. It seems to be trying to be powerful but just sounds repetitive as hell. Indecision's song is more straightforward metal influenced hardcore, a bit faster in tempo with screaming vocals. It's called "Last Beat of My Heart" and is written to Siousxie and the Banshees lyrics. Ho hum. (KB) Exit PO Box 263 New York, NY 10012

In/Humanity-Your Future Lies Smoldering At the Feet Of the Robots, EP

Side A delivers a moody track that could've easily slid off their magnum opus and recent "The Nutty Anti-Christ" LP. Scathing dreariness that blasts at the reenforcement of ignorance from generation to generation. The flipside is a complete thrash-out that bends to a catchy, melodic chorus. In/Humanity's brand of "East Coast Emo-Violence", whacked humor and insight grows brilliantly more over the top with each release. Each record comes with a Polaroid glued to the cover, so go pick up a couple of rolls of film at the photo mat and send 'em in!!!! (KS)

Stereonucleosis/In/humanity c/o New Clear Days, 919 Sumter St., Columbia, NC 29201

Intro to Airlift-The Music of..., 7"

Kind of an indie rock sounding emo done by a three piece from Indiana. Personal lyrics that go great with the non-distorted guitar riffs. Three songs that rock pretty hard in a mellow sort of way. (NW) In All Directions 2712 Allen Indianapolis IN 46203

Jakkpot-Hit or Miss, 7"

Good RnR punk on the A side...the flip started out real bad, with trippy drug rock weirdness that developed into cool punk. (GG)

American Punk Records 802 S. Broadway, Baltimore, MD 21231

Jet Bumpers-I Wanna Be Like Milhouse, 7"

Great, great packaging. Simpsons artwork with band full of Milhouses on the cover playing and a good Itchy and Scratchy on the back. I thought this was gonna be a band for me. Nope, might as well have stuck a bad 1996 Queers single inside. So long Stinktown. (EA)

Overseas somewhere, it is not on the record.

Jihad-Old Testemant, CD

This Michigan band pulses with searing vocal bite and plummeting rhythms that explode from quiet to chunky downbeat extremity. Jumping with intensity back and forth. Mid-Tempo to Down to Mid tempo and Down. Occasional Thrash breakouts, but those are truly not this bands strong point. The Serious, thought-through lyrics and push and pull churn are. This CD collect all the tracks from their 7", split LP and compilation appearances, as well as a live set from the 1995 Columbus fest. (KS)

Makoto Recordings, PO Box 50403, Kalamazoo, MI 49005

Joan Of Arc-A Portable Model Of, CD

Oh boy. From the light blue cover with boxes on it and tiny print, to the out of tune, experimental sounds of the songs, this CD blows. There is nothing worse than this trend of "experimental" music, replete with weird noises and those clothespin on the nose vocals. Icky at best... but most likely, demonic. (JP)

Jade Tree 2310 Kennwynn Road Wilmington, De 19810

Johnny Can't Read-John Agar, 7"

POP. POP. POP. Side A sound like the title song of a Saturday morning cartoon. Side B sounds like the title song of a Saturday morning cartoon. Maybe a bit like a crossbreeding of SPARKS and the MR. T. EXPERIENCE. POP. POP. POP. SCI-FI Lyrics, SCI-FI Cover, High-tech red vinyl. POP. (KS)

\$3.00 ppd to Happyland Transglobal, 5601 N. Sheridan Rd. Suite 11-C, CHICAGO, IL. 60660

replete with weird noises and those clothespin on the nose vocals.

Judas Iscariot-Harrison Bergeron Bound? 7"

A noisy bass, drums, vocals, and no guitar unit out of New York. The packaging is good and these rockers might seem intelligent with their interpretations of the fiction of Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. The only thing that turned me off is the canvas patch propaganda included with the record. It reads, "JUDAS ISCARIOT APPROVED BY THE HANDICAPPER GENERAL." I don't know if this is offensive or just plain stupid. Otherwise a good release. (SY) (\$3 ppd. Mountain, PO BOX 220320, Greenpoint Post Office, Brooklyn, NY 11222-9997)

Juggling Jugulars-New Toys, LP

Quick political punkers in an old school melodic vein, a la No Use For a Name. Cool stuff. (GG) Hiljaiset Levyt, PL 211 33201 Tampere, Finland

Karp-Self Titled LP, CD

Karp's best effort to date. They hit everything right on the head. Heavy and noisy and I have no clue where Jared gets his lyrical inspiration. This album contains some great lyrics. I'm always amazed at how much distortion Karp can throw on everything and make it sound so good. At one time you might you might have been lazy and just compared Karp to the Melvins. Beware! The Karp sound exists on its own. (SY)

(K Records, PO Box 7154, Olympia, WA 98507)

Kent 3-The Stories of the New West, CD

Kinda Oblivians without the noise. Lots of acoustic guitars and goofy lyrics. Geesh, I really liked their 2 x 7" awhile back, but his tires easily. This is some nice stuff, doesn't surprise me coming from the NW. It would be safe to assume these fellas take life real, real serious. (EA)

Super Electro PO Box 20401 Seattle, WA 98102

Kerosene 454-Race, CD

I'm pretty sure this is a collection of Kerosene 454's singles, but I could be wrong. Some of this stuff was recorded as early as 1992, so it's either that or some unreleased stuff that they've been holding onto. I'm not hep to K454's discography, but I am hep to the band. They've been overlooked for many years in the punk scene, never garnering the following that other, much less talented, bands have gotten. Which is not to say that they don't deserve it. Kerosene's blending of syncopated hardcore a'la 1.6 Band with dischordian noise is a sound that's all their own. Check it out. (DS)

Polyvinyl PO Box 1885 Danville IL 61834-1885

Kerosene 454-Came By To Kill Me, LP

Wow. I totally wasn't expecting this at all. I've always equated Kerosene 454 with a noisy 1.6 Band—very tight, very syncopated hardcore. This is much more dynamic and at points almost poppy. Yeah, it's still stop-on-a-dime tight, but there's a lit-"tle more soul to it. (DS)

Dischord/Slowdime

Kiss It Goodbye-She Loves Me, She Loves Me Not... CD

The next formation after Deadguy broke up. Heavy stuff quite reminiscent of Black Sabbath and Black Flag's "My War". Great guitar riffs make the songs rock. Yet, the album seems overproduced. There is too much vocal treatment and the guitars seem to be washed with reverb. If it was produced in the same style as Rorschach's "Protestant" album, this would be one of the best albums of the year. I hear the CMI charts love this. (SY)

(Revelation Records , PO Box 5232, Huntington Beach, CA 92615-5232)

Kurt-s/t, LP

Noisy dischordian hardcore. Not bad but nothing new. (DS)

X-M st Leonhardstr 18A 72202 Nagold Germany

Lake of Dracula-s/t, CD

Local Chicago hipsters Weasel Walter and Jim
O'Rourke bring you one more non-rock noise
extravaganza. One early '80s critic called this stuff
'pig-fucker" music, and that's pretty much about
right. If you like your art-noise grating and loud,
and largely without melody, you'll like this. (DC)
Skir Graft, PO Box 257546, Chicago, IL 60625

Lard-Pure Chewing Satisfaction, CD

Jello gets less witty with each record. I mean, a line like "I wanna join the Christian Coalition/so I can molest my children" is neither clever nor incisive satire — just dumb. He gives great interviews, just can't seem to write an interesting song anymore. And Jorgenson's metal locomotive thing was interesting through "A Mind is a Terrible Thing to Taste," and then got redundant. Who cares anymore? (DC) Alternative Tentacles Records

Latex Generation-360 degrees, CD

Very Bouncing Souls, but not as good. (EA) One Foot Records PO Box 3834 Cherry Hill, NJ 08034

L.E.S. Stitches-Snapped, CD

Taking a page from the late 70's punk rock handbook, this NY band has it wired. Snotty vocals ala the Dead Boys and killer instrumentation make this one of the punk rock drinking albums of the year. If you like bands like Anti-Flag and Blanks 77, then pick this up. (MH)

Eye pall Records PO Box 1653 Peter Stuyvesant Station NYC NY 10009

Les Vice Barons-Steel Blue Moods, CD

Great 90's instro band, this is a keeper in a genre full of shit. Great hidden track taken form a movie? And caught me real off guard. I suggest few CD's like this, but this has the talent, energy, and recording to put it up in the tops of the pops, oh yeah baby! Viva les Vice Barons. (EA)

Demolition Derby!/Nitro c/o Kris Verreth, Tervuursestwg 217, 1820 Perk, Belgium

Lick 57's- And The Band Played On!, CD

Power punk. Distortion. A driving beat.
Aren't there enough bands like this? (MD)
One Foot Records, PO box 3834, Cherry Hill, NJ, 08034-0592

Lifetime-Jersey's Best Dancers, LP

Easily Lifetime's best album. Unfortunately, if the rumor mill is correct, it's also their last. Lifetime has finally cemented their niche—expertly riding the line between hardcore and pop-punk. Ari's spot-on melodies contrast beautifully with the driving beats. Songs of love, heartbreak, & friendship fill this wonderful record. A must for any record collection. (DS)

Jade Tree 2310 Kennwynn Rd. DE 19810

Ligod-Four Excerpts from a Child's Diary, 7"

Ligod has a very cool way of putting their songs together. For example, they save one song from being a run-of-the-mill mediocre speedy hardcore tune by turning off guitar and bass during the distorted vocals—leaving only drums and voice. The other songs are speedy in parts with enough changes to keep my interest, they use noisy feedback just enough, the vocals are distorted, and the songs are technically challenging. The packaging is pretty cool, too. This is a good damn record. (SM)

Teemage Sex Vixens from Outer Space Records, 704 Palisades Dr., Akron, OH 44303

Lof & the Chones-PS We Hate You, LP

This record outta be on your turntable (or CD player, square!) now! It is important you demand your local record shop to get this and then buy em all up and give them to your friends as gifts of utter punkness. Tell them to burn their Lookout records and listen to Loli and the Chones. Every song about hate. "I've gotta gun", "I Hate your guts", "Sick of You" etc. Every song is short and you can sing along the first time you hear it. I am serious, you better but this fucker. (EA)

Long Hind Legs-s/t, CD

Not typical of Kill Rock Stars, or any other label or band. Kind of like krautrock avatars breaking into windham hill's studios with Morrissey and the guys in Felt. This album sounds like no one else at the moment. Creativity duly noted and appreciated. Good record. (DC)

Kill Rock Stars Records, 120 North East State Avenue #418, Olympia, WA 98501

Loomis-Planes vs. Tanks b/w Secret Asian Man, 7"

First off, Loomis used to be Sandbox. Loomis is a very indie sounding band, complete with the occasional walking melodies, lots o' distortion, and droning vocals. This is a good record to buy if you are into that realm of music. (MD)

Lon bardi Recording Company, PO box 2564, Madison, WI, 53701-2564

Mainstrike-Quest for the Answers, LP

This is amazing 1988 style sXe posi youth hardcore done by Europeans who pull off the sound better than most American sXe bands these days. Very similar to Chain of Strength, This is great, and deserves the attention of people everywhere. Fast hardcore with awesome build ups and breaks, intelligent lyrics, and great packaging. (NW)

Crucial Response Kaiserfield 98 46047 Oberhausen Germany

The Man I Fell In Love With-3-song, 7"

Moody, mellow, but slightly noisy at times pop music. Well done, but just not my cup of tea. I guess fans of bands like Seam would probably enjoy this. (MH)

Donut Friends 1030 Jessie Ave. Kent OH 44240

Man's Ruin-S/T, 7"

Slow snottiness from an all female punk group that's pretty damn mediocre. Cover of "I touch Myself" which they probably think is ironic. (GG) Man's Ruin Fan Club PO Box 5652 Atlanta, GA 30307

McRackins-Oddities & Eggcentricities Vol. 1,

This band has always seemed weird to me, with that white face paint and all, but I have to say this is a really good CD, despite the scary clown face stuff. Great cover of "Surrender" by Cheap Trick. Great songs like "Pee Pee Dance" and "Dr. Giggles". Fun, fast pop punk is what it's all about. A great intro for people who never really got into this band in the first place... you just might be hooked. (IP)

Stiff Pole Records PO Box 20721 St. Petersburg, FI 33 142

Me First and the Gimme Gimmes-Have a Ball, CD

Chalk one up for pointless CDs put out by big labels (and that will sell big). Why on earth do we want to hear a Fat Records band do covers of songs like "Leaving on a Jet Plane", "Seasons in the Sun" or "Rocket Man".... Come on, original? Covers can be cool, but turn the kids onto real punk rockn-roll folks. I am sure you will buy this instead of the new Steve and the Jerks LP, you idiot. (EA)

Me First and the Gimme Gimmes-Diamond, 7"

I am all for punk bands covering conventional pop songs, but there is something abso-fucking-lutely wrong when a band decides to cover Neil Diamond, especially when they do it so well it scares me.

Sweet Caroline and America on this little slab of vinyl. I'll have cold sweats tonight. (MH)

Hopeless Records PO Box 7495 Van Nuys CA
91409-7495

Midvale-First Aid for Air Men, 7"

Oooh, the singer's missing notes left and right here, 'causing my cat to dart out of the room. It's too bad, because musically, Midvale is nice modern hardcore without all the horrid metal shit you can get sometimes. But that singer... Oh! (DS)
Ed Walters Records PO Box 4161 Highland Park NJ 08904

The Miles-Johnny Fender Bender, 7"

This is a bad cross between Weston and They Might Be Giants, two bands that aren't particularly compatible. Stylistically, it's silly and I just can't get into it. (IP)

Pooch Records PO Box 451632 Sunrise, Fl 33345

Millencolin-For Monkeys, CD

A Swedish band with a "Fat" sound. This disc is chock full o' melodic punk tunes, with a couple of nifty ska numbers thrown in for good measure. This should be a big hit with the big pants crowd, and rightfully so, because this disc is there, daddy. (MH) Epitaph 2798 Sunset Blvd. LA CA 90026

Misconduct-A Change, LP

Youth crew hardcore right down to the college sweatshirt lettering and the "gang-of-angry-males" choruses. Yet another band moshing it up ten-yearsago style. (SM)

Bad Taste Records, St. Sodergatan 38, 222 23 Lund, Sweden

Mondo Topless-Punk Rock Party, LP

Queers, Beatnik Termite type stuff from somewhere not in the US. (GG)
Vacation House Records

More RAM-s/t, 7"

Whooo doggy, another Nirvana sounding record?
What "is" it with this record label?? Don't get me
wrong, I think it's cool that hey have a song called
"My Name Is Fuckface", but I think it sucks that they
sound like the harder moments of Nirvana. (JP)
Meat Records PO Box 10201 Fargo, ND 58106

Morning Shakes-Lotta Trash! Lotta Action!, CD

I have given mixed reviews to this bands singles in the past. Sometimes they are totally on, with a couple of fair B. Childish tunes as well. Other times they are off, for many reasons. This disc spins and they are on about 87%, a decent ratio B+, I believe. Steve Baise (of Devil Dog fame) recorded and played the Farfisa on this one, so it smokes indeed. This band will get bigger than this, so strap in and sing along now. The East Coast and Midwest are gonna steal Punk Rock back before the 21st Century and the Morning Shakes will be in the front of the back. (EA)

Cacophone Records PO Box 6058 Albany, NY 12206

Mother Fucker 666-S/T, LP

Cool! 666 means this must be a metal record! I dig metal, like King Diamond and Testament. Wait, this ain't metal. That's no BC Rich guitar, and I hear no finger pickin' either! And Jeff Dahl's in this band. He's not a metal head. He just bounces from one shitty "punk" band to another. Lame punk RnR on Get Hip. (GG)

Get Hip Records PO Box 666 Canonsburg, PA 15317

Give me country, give me Bruce Hornaby-anything but this, please.

Motive-A Doctrine of Scripted Torture, 7"

The members of Motive must have reached into the deepest, darkest and most disturbed corners of their beings to pull out these songs. They follow the path the bands like Groundwork started, but take it to an even more distraught-sounding, heavier level. They even through in some softer, slower parts without sounding cheesy. The picture of the band lying on the floor, screaming into guitar pickups, mic stand knocked over, says it all. (SM)

Exit, PO Box 263, New York, NY 10012

The Mullens-Isabel, 7"

Trashy lo-fi sixties-influenced garage rock from
Texas with hints of the Ramones and the Stooges.
Retro in a very good way. I dig it, baby! (MH)
Pan Records of Helter Skelter Via degli Ausoni, 84
- 00185 Roma, Italy

The Muties-First Issue, CD

Melodic punk from Spain with vocals in English.
Catchy hooks in these songs remind me of bands like the Misfits in their "Walk Among Us" phase. These are great songs, but they are marred by muddy production and the disc is way too short with only 6 songs clocking in at 11 1/2 minutes. (MH)
Barny Rods Apdo. 1743 33080 Oviedo Spain

My Lai-3.16.68, 7"

This new Chicago band offers a paring not far from to Indianapolis's now-defunct ICE 9. While not as discordantly Chaotic as the former, they match furious hardcore with the quirkiness of midwest post punk rock. Most evident in MY LAI's really cool guitar work, feedback and noise. Vocally slobberingly spastic and charged with quick blasts of energy. These four songs reverberate with the same psychoticness of ANTIOCH ARROW or HEROIN. Good Debut.(KS)

\$3 ppd to DIVOT, PO Box 14061, Chicago, IL. 60614-0061

My Life in Rain-Slowburn, LP

This record is ruined by it's good production. The instrumentation—staccato guitars, syncopated drums, & precise harmonies—just sounds too sparse because the production is too clean. Let things bleed into each other a little, let that guitar sound a little dirtier, and it could be a pretty good Repeater-era Fugazi knock off. (DS)

Allied Records

New Wet Kojak-Nasty International, LP

Sounds to me like Lou Reed going "alternative" (mainstream) in the '90's with a bit of acid jazz thrown in. MTV for the new millennium? (NW) Touch N Go PO Box 25520 Chicago IL 60625

N.I.L. 8-Doug, LP

Pretty uninteresting punk rock from Chicago, these guys try it all: pop punk, ska, fast stuff, etc. I'm sure someone likes them but I don't. More music for the MTV generations. (NW)

Fuse Records PO Box 578497 Chicago IL 60657

No Way Out-In With The Old Out With The New, 7"

Didn't Minor Threat break up? (MD) Straight Force Records, 49 Crestdale Rd, Glastonbury, CT, p6033

Nobodys-Welcome to the Springs-Fuck You, 7"

This is not your ordinary Nobodys 7". Here they pay tribute to some of the local Colorado Springs bands that they either played in or were influenced by. As such, all of these songs have their own feel. Two of them even have a guest female vocalist. A very cool idea and a very good record. (MH) Hopeless Records PO Box 7495 Van Nuys CA 91409-7495

Nobuhjest-I Escape You, 7"

Poppy indie-rock slash emo with horribly off key and bland vocals. I try not to write reviews this brief but I can't help it in this case. (KB) Smooth Lips Records PO Box 165736 Miami, FL 33116-5736

One Ton Shotgun-Police Navidad, CD

Not bad, not great. Run of the mill, average punky stuff. There really isn't anything all that original going on here, though the lyrics are fun on songs like "Don't Mess With The Amish" and "Joey Bag Of Donuts". (JP)

Atomic Action 2030 West Main Road Middletown, RI 02842

Operation Cliff Clavin/ The Connie Dungs-Split, 7"

While they don't sound exactly like them, Operation: Cliff Clavin remind me an awful lot of Crimpshrine. Actually, they're what I imagine Crimpshrine would sound like today, with all this fast pop punk music going around. Of course, this means I think Operation: Cliff Clavin is an excellent band. The songs have meaningful lyrics and they even took the time to explain the meaning behind the songs. The Connie Dungs are a little faster, a little snottier, and basically, pretty good. How can you go wrong with a song called "Bedwetter"? This is the 7" of the bi month, meaning it comes with the highest recommendation. Send for it, listen to it and damn it, like it a lot. (JP)

Plar-it-x Records 5810 W. Willis Rd. Georgetown, IN, 471 22-9117

The Other-s/t, CD

This is a rocknroll record with punk overtones - kinda like Primus meets Bad Religion.
The speedy/punky stuff is well done, but the
metallic guitar leads and rock vocals get on
my nerves. Too polished and professional for
my scummy punk tastes. (MH)
Honest Don's Snug Fitting Trousers PO Box

Honest Don's Snug Fitting Trousers PO Box 192027 SF CA 94119-2027

The Party of Helicopters-No title, 7"

Experimental crap. Minimalist arty graphics and packaging. Times like this I feel a curse upon me as a record reviewer. I just don't really have anything else to say about this. (KB) Donut Friends 1030 Jessie Ave. Kent, OH 44240

The Party of Helicopters/The Underground Asian Movement–Four Tales of Bloody Horror, split 7"

Argh! Someone kill me now! Death to experimental "music"! No! I can't take it any more!
Give me country, give me Bruce Hornsby,
anything but this, please. (KB)

Donut Friends 1030 Jessie Ave. Kent, OH 44240

Peppermint Lunch-7"

Melodic pop punk mixed with a bit of ska makes me want to puke. Not much original going on here. This band is from Finland, four songs for those who might find interest. (NW) Free Animals Records PO Box 586 20301 Tatku Finland

Peter and the Test Tube Babies-S/T, 7"

First reaction — awesome sleeve art. Second — beautiful black and white splatter wax, coolest I've seen since the No Talents LP. Third — strange mix of old school British punk and modern Dr. Strange type stuff. As it stands, mid tempo hackneyed punk with melodies. (GG)

Dr. Strange Records PO Box 7000-117 Alta Loma, CA 91701

Peter and the Test Tube Babies-Test Tube Trash, LP

Old school british flavored punk. (GG)
Dr. Strange Records

Thee Phantom 5ive-Play Guitars Galore,

Snoozer of an instro record. Plain and simple. All the nice packaging couldn't hide it in the world. (EA)

Dionysis PO Box 1975 Burbank, CA 91507

Pipe-Slowboy, D

I can't quite put my finger on who this band reminds me of. The guitar parts are distorted rock, the bass parts are poppy punk, and the driving beat is very Fat Wreck Chords reminiscent. Probably one of the most intriguing parts of this band are the semithroaty, partly snotty vocals: they just seem to bring all of the musical components together. All in all, "slowboy" is a good CD to pick up on a rainy day. Well worth your precious time, even when the cheesy guitar riffs begin to irk you. (MD)

Merge Records, PO Box 1235, Chapel Hill, NC, 27514

Poor Dumb Bastards-North American Wild Ass, CD

I don't get it. I think it's all about being white trash or something, and I know I don't like it. Country Punk? It doesn't work at all. Things this CD is: a frisbee, a coaster, a shiny distraction from the music. Things this CD is not: entertaining, amusing, listenable. (JP) Straight Razor Records PO Box 474 Baytown, TX 77522-0474

Pop Rocks!/Jerry deCicca-split, 7"

Pop Rocks! present two raw, poppy love songs. It sounds like it was 4 track recorded, and while it's not the greatest recording ever, it has all the charm of a basement band. And for that alone, points are rewarded. I'd like to hear more from this band. Jerry DeCicca is just plain weird, a solo recording with (I think) a guitar and vocals. I never "get" these things and I guess that's why I never like them. Oh well. (JP)

Break Up records 366 E. 15th Ave. Columbus, Oh 43201

Portrait of Poverty-s/t, LP

This is one of those bands that, if I saw them play a show, I'd go outside. Generic rock-oriented punk with bad lyrics, rough vocals with some sing-along choruses, and simple, boring, predictable songs. Maybe in 1984 they would've been a good skate rock band... maybe not. (SM)

Mother Records/Deen Greath Organization, 817 Division Ave., Suite C, Tacoma, WA 98403

Pound WI-Shut Her down, Clancy. She's pumpin' Mud, CD

Quiet-to-noise, with feedback filling in over pounding drum beats, early morning smoker's-cough vocals. moody cutting along indie-rock patterns, following in a SUB-POP sort of motif, but falling short of the melodic-ness of say, DINOSAUR JR. and Not heavy enough to be SOUNDGARDEN or even BLOODCIRCUS. Nine Songs. (KS) Pinecone, 504 E. Wilson, Madison, WI 53703

Pressgang-Faith, CD

Politicore from Pennsylvania. Philosophically, this is pretty right on, calling for a "socialist/collectivist world-state." Musically, however, it leaves me a little cold. It's upbeat, straightforward hardcore (with a tiny emo tinge) but it's got a really annoying vocalist who's mixed WAY too high into the mix. Also strange is the listing of a female vocalist who appears like twice on the entire record. (DS)

Self Serv Records PO Box 71466 Pittsburgh PA 15213

The Promise Ring-The Horse Latitudes, CD

No, this isn't the new Promise Ring record, it's a CD collecting the songs off all their singles and a couple new tracks. For those of you that only have their first LP, this is definitely worth picking up, as some of their greatest songs didn't even appear on that album. For those that do have it, it's still worth picking up if only for the last song, "I Never Trusted the Russians," an upbeat number with horns! This will tide you over until the October release of their new disk. (DS)

Jade Tree

Prop13-Change is Good, CD

Speedy, melodic So-Cal style hardcore from these veteran (10 year!) punks on their first (!) full length release. These guys have a tight and solid sound that cruises right along and makes you want to jump around. Not a classic, but an excellent release none-the-less. (MH)

Theologian PO Box 1070 Hermosa Beach CA 90254

Race Car Riot-s/t, 7"

Race Car Riot proves their mastery of the quiet/loud sound on this 7", moving from parts that barely register on my record player to booming, soaring guitar lines in the blink of an eye. A great 7". Definitely a band to keep an eye on. (DS)
Red Jagwire 400 W. St. Elmo #120 Austin, TX 78745

Rareform-Tense, 7"

Funky beaten doom metal. Two songs. Black vinyl. Scary growling vocals. Good heavy Musicians. The drill-bit-bit. Stop and start. Stop and start. FUNKY BEATIN' DOOM METAL!! A form not rare enough! From Portland, Maine and getting closer to Norway with each passing second. (KS)

\$3.00 ppd to DUBIOUS HONOR, PO Box 5134, Porland, ME 04101

Ray-O-Vacs-s/t, 7"

This kind of has a garagey feel to it. If the production was a little weaker, it might work. Two songs that didn't do much for me. (NW)

No address

Rebel Truth-S/T, 7"

This burns with creative flair, ideas and feeling, and holds a fourteen years test of time. From Sacramento, California, 1983, this Nine song EP spews creative hardcore with no rules, No blueprints, just creative fast angry music. Great vocals, no goofy barking, no growling. An invigorating blast of energy and impassioned ideas from a band that could've easily faded into "collector's corner" obscurity, but is rescued by this low-cost reissue of their only EP as well as a recent Grand Theft Audio retrospective CD. (KS)

Version Sound/Independent Communications, PO BOX. 429, Yellow Springs, OH 45387

Reclusives-More of the Same, 7"

Pretty raw punk rawk that is played mid-paced and fast. I was surprised cause the band pictures look like Huey Lewis and the News. Not the best music in the world, but not the worst. (EA)

Empty Records PO Box 12034 Seattle WA 98102

Red Aunts/Constant Comment-split, 7"

Call it a one sided single for all I care. This single comes with Hit It or Quit It! Zine and the Red Aunts shine big time on this slab. Reminds me less of the "Saltbox" LP and more of "#1 Chicken" Though recorded in 1997 it sounds more like the Aunts of old. What it shows you, is that they haven't lost it in the least. Though a little long and not enough vocals, still a killer song. The other side (Constant Comment) is trippy music with a long sound clip over it. Sounds like an amateur playing with a newly bought 4-track recorder. (EA) Sympathy for the Record Industry

Refused-Everlasting, LP

Cool to see Steve and Co. Put out some European nardcore. These guys are from Sweden but sound like pretty typical new school sXe. Slow chugga chugga parts with some emo parts thrown in. ntelligent lyrics kept me listening. (NW) EVR PO Box 14 Hudson, NY 12534

Regulator Watts-New Low Moline b/w Rocket Chicago, 7"

You get two songs and you want more. Hence this is a repeat listener. I got a chance to see these rockers play in Boston last year and it was a great show. The singer/guitarist had a dislocated shoulder and ne solved this problem with the use of some duct ape. This band features the members of DC stoner rock band Hoover, that didn't go on to bore most people with the Crown Hate Ruin. There is nothing boring about Regulator Watts. The front side is energetic melody-core with great guitar parts. The back side is a mellow piece quite reminiscent of Hoover. Go see their live show. (SY) Slowdime / Dischord Records

The Revelers-Pioneering the Space Frontier with.... 7"

A charming little 7" by a band that could be easily mistaken for the Who or perhaps the Jam. Seems like a weird record for 1997, but I guess some people just need to live in the past. Very cool if you like the aforementioned bands. Blue vinyl. (MH) Break Up! Records 91 East Patterson Ave. Columbus OH 43202

Revolvers-She's Out Of Your Life, 7"

coppy and upbeat and catchy and melodic ... a whole lot like the Descendants. This record is four catchy love songs with some pretty decent lyrics. The recording could be better, but on the other hand it's nice to hear a band like this that isn't all polished. Good stuff for fans of pop. (SM) PO Box 5865, Kansas City, MO 64171

Rhythm Collision-Crunch Time, CD

Crunch Time" is a recording of a live show in France, May 22, 1996. "Live" including songs and panter. As far as live albums go, this is a great one. the recording quality is better than some studio albums, and the banter is short and fun. "Crunch Time" is a great album for fans, and a great album for those who have never heard this band and their distortion laden punk rock tendencies. (MD)

Fue ed By Ramen, POB 12563, Geinesville, FL,

Ruby Falls-Heroines, ?

Female mainstream rock that should not be reviewed in punk zines. GARBAGE!! (NW) Silver Girl Records PO Box 161024 San Diego CA 92176

Rumford-All Night Train Wreck, LP

Noisey rockin blues that's cool cause it's real feeling and not overproduced. (NW) Dubious Honor Records PO Box 5134 Portland ME 04101

Saint James Infirmary-four song, 7"

Sorry Allied I don't dig this one too much. The vocals are buried and the music is just sort of metal like. I know the Allied crowd will eat this up, I just don't feel it's worth the expectations of this band. (EA) Allied Records PO Box 460683, San Francisco, CA

Satkynukke-S/T, 7"

Speedy punk from Finland — so speedy, in fact, it sounds like speed metal in some places. The vocals are that sort of shouted/sung variety, the recording sounds kind of hollow, and, I dunno, I just didn't like this very much. (SM)

PL \$86, 20301 Turku 30, Finland

Sham 69-Kings and Queens LP

What can you say about these innovators of punk via the 1970's. Way ahead of its time punk rock from Britain. This is a collection of songs between 1976 - 1978; great songs by a legendary band. Weird to listen to on CD, but very cool. (NW) Creativeman Disc 1875 Century Park E. 1165 Los Angeles, CA 90067

Sam the Butcher-No Time, 7"

I'm not the biggest fan of ska, but these guys are good at what they do. Musically similar sounding to Op Ivy. Three songs with decent lyrics. Fans of ska core should pick this up. (NW)

Far Out Records PO Box 14361 Ft. Lauderdale FL 33302

The Sandpebbles-s/t, 7"

Wow, this is fucking great, Dischord-style punk that's way poppier than anything Dischord would ever touch. Fucking brilliant. Masterfully crafted songs that are totally driving and upbeat yet edgy and great great great. I want more. (DS) Interidol Sound PO Box 47 Port Washington NY 11050

The Saturn V-Featuring Orbit, 7"

Best Dionysis single I have heard in awhile. Very Beat, normally an instro band (I believe) but with Orbit on lead vocals they catch your attention. (EA) Dionysis PO Box 1975 Burbank, CA 91507

Scared of Chaka-Automatic, 7"

retty cool crunchy guitar old school flavored garagey pop, like a mature Snotboy. A darn good band with a lot of material out. (GG) Empty Records

Scott Free-Garbage Man, 7"

Sounds like experimental '80s MTV rock. I guess anybody can put out a 7" these days. (NW) Stampede PO Box 11980 Chicago IL 60611

Screw 32-Under the Influence of Bad People, LP

really liked their "Unresolved Childhood ssues" LP and was disappointed by this album. They seem to have slowed down quite bit to this uninspiring mid tempo Dag Nasty-influenced hardcore with fairly generic sounding yelled/semi melodic vocals. The songs start out sounding like they could be really good but usually end up being repetirive and flat. Two of the songs are really great (such as "Broken" which is just catchy as hell and "Responsibility" which is melodic and anthemic) but otherwise, I'd recommend checking out "Unresolved..." before getting this. I think Screw 32 is one of those bands that is awesome live but leave a bit to be desired on vinyl. Proceeds go to Food Not Bombs which is really cool. (KB)

Fat Wreck Chords PO Box 13690 San Francisco, CA 94119-3690

Sea Monkeys-Vs. Bigfoot, mini LP

Goofy punk rock from the East Coast. Liked these guys from a real old single way back and was surprised to see they are still kicking. VML has had some hits and some clunkers. This falls closer to the hits. Songs like "Stop Looking at my Underwear" and the Tarzan outfits on the flip of the cover tell you what o expect. (EA)

VML PO Box 183 Franklin Park, IL 60131

Seven Foot Spleen-Boredom and Disease, 7"

Earthshaking SABBATH reverberations iced with Feedback and growl. Starting from a slow pressure cooked point, boiling to manic chugging thrash with guttural vocals. The second side avoids the slow start and mixes the plod and high velocity with better results. A Rocked-on, dirty sludge with pounding drums. More amplification and a less muddy mix would push this in the right direction. Four songs. (KS)

Rhodhiss Records, 153 Duke ST., Granite Falls, NC 28630

Sgt. 6 Assault-S/T, 7"

Rockin' punk with an emphasis on the rock. Nothing new or exciting. Ex-Dummies if that means anything to you. (SM)

007 Records, 534 East 14th St., Apt. #15, New York, NY 10009

Shakuhachi Surprise-Space Streakings Sighted Over Mount Shasta, CD

The guys from Space Streakings (Japanese noise band) and Mount Shasta (midwestern noise band) join together with Steve Albini on the boards to bring you a wall of noise that sounds even noisier than the stuff these guys do on their own. Not bad, though probably better appreciated live. (DC)
Skin Graft, PO Box 257546, Chicago, IL 60625

Showcase Showdown-Soothing Moments, 7"

I feel that I could waste this whole review telling you about something besides this single. Why? It is that good. I saw these boys (and girl) play about four songs in a basement about a year and a half ago and was blown away. The cops came and ruined that show, but the vinyl lives on. Ranks right up there with their LP and other singles. The Showcase Showdown have personality, a reason, and Ping Pong (vocals) reminds me enough of our hometown Doc Dart (of Crucifucks) to say oh yeah. Snatch up anything you can, because in another year you will wish you did. (EA)

Beer City Records PO Box 26035, Milwaukee, WI 53226-0035

Shutdown-Turning the Tide, LP

Old school self-proclaimed youth crew style SxE 2-chord hardcore. As with pop punk bands, the vocals in music like this are usually the determining factor of whether I like a band or not. The singer is somewhat prepubescent sounding and seems to be able to shout out the really generic lyrics in only one tone in every song. This style has been copied many times over by much better bands. One suggestion: the Brooklyn Youth Crew should change their name to the Brooklyn Young White Males Crew. (KB)

Striving For Togetherness Records PO Box 564571 College Pt, NY 11356-4571 US or Luitpoldplatz 15A 95444 Bayreuth, Germany

Sicko-Three Tea, 7'

Woo hoo! Score! I get to review the new Sicko 7"! One upbeat pop tune and a couple of more mellow songs. While not as catchy as some of their stuff, this seven is still a must for anyone who digs Sicko. (MH)

Mutant Pop 5010 NW Shasta Corvallis OR 97330

Silent Fall-In A Perfect World..., 7"

Chunky titanic-core, the pounce-your-headleviathan-style of churning downbeat slow hardcore with melodically sung vocals that burn hard with intonation of "care".(Uh...that's a good or bad thing, depends on your perspective) Falls to midtempo, and back to slow melodic bridges on metallic squeaking guitar parts and builds back up on crescendoing bass and guitar plunk. This Minneapolis' bands Eight songs here deal with friendships, family relations, death of a friend, against racism. (KS)

One Percent Records, PO Box 141048, Minneapolis, MN 55414-1048

Silent Majority-Life of a Spectator, LP

This is a solid album of melodic hardcore that wanders a little too far into the rock realm of things for my tastes, but still remains a good record. The vocals serve to make the record too rock on a lot of songs, but on some, like the slower, softer numbers, they really work well. The music is played well and diverse enough to keep the listener's attention. Plus, the vinyl is swirled blue. Obviously something a lot of effort was put into. (SM)

Exit PO Box 263, New York, NY 10012

Sin Alley-Detroit 442, CD

Two originals and three covers (including the overdone Money). This is a decent disc though would rather get a full length crammed onto this one. Martine van Hoof's vocals are very Exene like and definitely give you the feeling that she could kick your assessment back to America if you ever visited Europe. Very Rock and Roll ala 197-. (EA)

Demolition Derby! c/o Kris Verreth, Tervuursestwg 217, 1820 Perk, Belgium

Slacker-A Day In The Life Of, CD

It never fails... Mutant Pop is putting out some really great music. Nine songs of the breed of pop punk that is Mutant Pop. Fast, sing along and furious is Slacker (not at all what I expected from the name). Worth a

shot. Get the catalog, all that good stuff. (JP) Mutant Pop 5010 NW Shasta Corvallis, OR 97330

Slacker-Covering the Bases, 7'

Decent lo-fi pop punk from this (I assume) teenage band. Song topics include video games, hating school, skateboarding, and girlfriends. In other words, all of the topics that pop punk bands sing about. These guys are still a little rough around the edges, but if they stay together I think they'll be a band to listen for. (MH)

Mulant Pop 5010 NW Shasta Corvallis OR 97330

Slak-Another Disaster, 7"

This is average punk rock- it's fast and it has some style, but all in all, it's nothing that's terribly original. Then again, what really is these days? Old school anarchy styled punk fans would like this one a lot. (JP)

Sonic Swirl Records PO Box 770303 Lakewood, OH 44107

Slingshot Episode-s/t, 7"

I've never seen so many words packed into one song before. Mainstream rock n roll that plagues this world enough as it is. Female vox that don't do a thing for me. (NW)

Rags to Riches Records PO Box 971 Bloomington IN 47402

The Slobs-Down the Tubes, LP

This lazy assessment band finally had the time to put an LP out. It must be hard with having your own studio and everything, but this is the Slobs. I love em', great influences, nice obscure covers and a singer who sounds like out hometown hero Doc Dart. My tops of the month go to The Slobs. Here classics like "Tired of Fucking You" and "Peer Pressure" a Screamers cover done to near perfection. (EA)

Certsless 5945 Monticello Ave. Cincinnati, OH 45224

The Spills-Gonna Go Blind, 7"

Good RnR punk with nice fuzzy recording — the kind of stuff I love. Good stuff, 5 songs — between these guys and the Crumbs, I'm beginning to have respect for Florida punk. (GG)

Stiff Pole Records PO Box 20721 St. Petersburg, FL 33742

The Spites-S/T, 7"

Arizona hails the Spites, and Rip Off thought they deserved a record. Unfortunately I didn't see these boys at the Rumble because I was getting food, too bad. I heard that they weren't that good and that they did almost all covers. I dunno, I wasn't there. This record though is very Rip Off (the band, and label). Lo fi but you can hear some overdubbing in there. "Stayin Out" and "Cheap Beer, Fast Cars, and Girls" are exactly what you would expect. (EA) POFF records 581 Maple Ave., San Bruno CA

RIP OFF records 581 Maple Ave., San Bruno CA 94166

Oh god, a band with a song called "Smash the System," and they're serious about it.

Splintered 12–Reprimanding the Stars Until Daylight..., CD

This is how I imagine Pearl Jam sound, though having never heard anything but that one song "Jeremy" I could be totally off base. Rock music with heavy parts and mellow melodic parts.

Boring to me, but it sounds quite professional so I suppose fans of the genre would enjoy it. (MH)

Shiry Shoes PO Box 459 Haverhill MA

Sputnic-s/t, 7"

There is always something good about bands like this. The 7" is raw and powerful, with fast songs of socially aware lyrics. Pretty much everything is good about his record, if you like the diy 7" sound, and if you don't, then why are you reading this zine? (JP) Buford Records 2 Oak Street Ext Franklin, Ma 02038

Squiggy-Anti-Establishment, 7"

Wow, talk about generic ass song titles ("Go Home", "Boots and Braces, Studs and Leather", "Dead End Kids" and the title track). Very similar to GBH music and vocal-wise but it's not topnotch hardcore like them. My friend Art says this band reminds him of the Casualties. The production on this isn't very good which I would guess takes the edge off of these songs that is needed to make this a good record. Terrible cliché lyrics about posers, unity, etc. (KB)

Headache Records PO Box 204 Midland Park, NJ 07432

The Stalag Seventeen-One Forty-Four, 7"

Nice; driving emo-tinged 'core, with great use of dual vocalists (one sings, the other screams mixed quietly in the background but then they come together for harmonies). Worth picking up. (DS) 16402 Lobo Ln. Spring, TX 77379

State Route 522/Lying on Loot, split 7"

State Route 522 side: quiet clean guitar, kick in with a bit of intensity, switch back to clean guitar. Indie rock/emo (more on the indie rock side) with female vocals. Lying on Loot sounds like it's on a soundtrack to a movie during the part where some kids are frolicking in a meadow on a sunny day. Acoustic guitar, violins, sweet female vocals. Repetitive. Yuck. (KB)

Excursion PO Box 20224 Seattle, WA 98102

Staynless-S/T, 7"

A couple poorly-recorded hardcore songs here — one a distraught kind of number, the other a little math-rockish, bringing Shotmaker to mind. Could be a good live band, but the songs lack that extra something to make them really powerful. (SM) 2541 Cardigan, Memphis, TN 38119

Steve McQueens-Mission to Rock, 7'

Whoo! Cool as hell German garage punk. Great stuff. I have been a fan of this band since I first heard their "Trini Trimpop" record, in spite of their annoying Greg Lowery/Rip Offs/Supercharger worship. (And yes, you did guess it — rocking garage punk in a Supercharger vein) (GG)

Wrench Records BCM Box 4049, London WC1n 3XX

Stimpy-King of Rock'N'Roll, 7"

Three chord melodic punk that's catchy in that pop-punk way but so generic. Every 3 chord pop-punk band sounds the same to me these days so I can't say I really dig this. The songs on side 2 are a little harder and more garagey than the tunes on side 1 so I like them a bit more but they're still kinda generic. (KB)

V.M L. PO Box 183 Franklin Park, IL 60131

Storm & Stress-s/t, CD

If there was a cage match for experimental/improvindie-punk band dominance between Storm & Stress and Jade Tree's Joan of Arc, Storm & Stress would win hands down. Where Joan of Arc tends to get repetitive & fade into the background, Storm & Stress keeps it interesting with their true improving madness. At times quiet and haunting, other times loud and full-on-crazy, there's nary a dull moment on this disk. Hardcore kids that think Joan of Arc invented this stylee, take note: there's something better out there. (DS)

Touch & Go

Stormwatch-The Right To Remain...Violent ! CD

I think this is the first Oi! Record I have heard in a long time that I actually like. It is traditional yet the sound is freshened up. The songs are super catchy with lyrical content ranging from getting drunk to getting in fights. There is a strong skinhead theme going on. I can't really get into the content though it's worth a listen. (SY)

(G.M.M. PO Box 15234, Atlanta, GA 30333)

Straight-Faced-Broken, LP

At first when I heard this I didn't like the vocals which I thought sounded strained and forced but after a few more listens, I started to really like them. This is hardcore minus the ever-popular metal influence with yelled vocals and shouted choruses with the occasional melodic singalongs. None of the breakdown or mosh parts seemed forced - the music naturally flows and builds, particularly on the song "No Ambition" which is awesome. The lyrics range from personal to anti-tough guy to vaguely sociopolitical to scene-related stuff. This is a really solid release, not groundbreaking but creative enough to capture my attention and not sound generic. Good

production, good songs, good musicianship.
They played this LP at the Fireside Bowl
(Chicago all-ages venue) the other day and I
saw a bunch of people rocking out to it. (KB)
Fearless Records 13772 Goldenwest St. #545
Westminster, CA 92683

Stray Bullets-S/T, 7"

Oh god, a band with a song called "Smash the System," and they're serious about it. Stray Bullets play gutsy punk in a speedy way with a lot of yelling and anger and a little melody here and there. It's not bad, but nothing new. (SM)

Doing It For The Kids, PO Box 18661, Minheapolis, MN 55418

Stretch-Freedom is in Peril. 7"

Melodic punk from the UK. along the lines of POLITICAL ASYLUM, VISIONS OF CHANGED or mid-tempo SNFU material. Driven with overly sung vocals and thoughtful lyrics touching on Friendships, TV, etc. A four-song, 1-sided EP, Silk Screened on the other side and packed in a hand-printed sleeve with booklet. The four-track basement recording detracts from the music substantially, but as a final document of a cool, but sadly defunct band, it has to, and does work.(KS)

REFUSENIK, UK.

Strongarm-The Advent of a Miracle, LP

At first listen I thought these guys to be a wicked Pantera rip off, but they actually ol' school hardcore fast parts (not enough). This is polished, and a bit too overproduced for my liking, but there is an ass for every seat, so I'm sure a ton of you "hard", Earth Crisis loving jocks will love this. (NW)

Tooth and Nail Records PO Box 12698 Seattle WA 98111

Sunday Puncher-The Liquid Eye, CD

Who are the Sunday Puncher? I've never heard of this band before, and yet they sound like I should have. Playing a mature hard-indie sound that would sound right at home on Touch & Go (big drums, big guitars), this goes down pretty smooth. The only hitch are the vocals, which are mixed too loudly for my tastes. (DS)

Turnbuckle Records

whenever a straightedge band has a lyric like, "we are right and they are wrong," I instantly dismiss the whole project

Supergirls-Not My Country, CD

As far as I can tell there are no females in this band... but whatever. Supergirls play melodic punk that is interesting in that they occasionally have some quirky stop and go and slow parts that break things up and keep my interest. They also aren't as polished as many melodic punk bands, which I actually find refreshing. Good debut CD. (MH)

Liberation Records PO Box 17746 Anaheim CA 92817

Superstar/Pony Boy Curtis split-S/T, 7"

This is an upbeat, poppy, little record — not poppy in that Queers/NOFX sort of way, but poppy in that earnest, melodic, he's-singing-his-brain-out kind of way. Both bands play songs that sound like they really put their heart into them, but I think I like the Superstar side better — reminds me of the first Whirlybird record, if that means anything. Couple all that with cool packaging and this is a winner of a record. (SM)

Jive Turkey, 3627 Mallory, Memphis, TN 38111

Syau-S/T, LP

Bit-mapping the Distortion-garbled noise-soundscape, this German Bands plunges into Euro-arty pointlessness only to reach back out and pull you in with rough-edged powerful BIRTHDAY PARTY/ LAUGHING HYE-NAS/SCRATCH ACID styled Chomps. A good late night record of back-washed dark dementia with a fuzzy walkman-in-the-pants recording quality in it's favor. 14 songs hewn from a heavy vinyl plate. (KS)

Fidel Bastro, MethfesselStr. 10, 20257 Hamburg, GERMANY

The Syphlloids-Riding the Corporate Muscle, CD

This is either the stupidest band I've ever heard, or they're absolutely brilliant irony-filled pranksters. Playing rockabilly-inspired straightahead punk rock, with lyrics like "if it ain't punk/ it ain't worth shit/see you in the pit," this is either brain-dead songwriting or the most biting critique of punk to come along in a while. Unfortunately, I don't think that the Syphlloids are that smart... Too bad. (DS)
Zigmo Records Heritage Plaza 4 Norman Street Salem, MA 01970

Team Dresch-the new, 7'

A new version of Team Dresch and I am disappointed. Sounded more like Tsunami and didn't have the loud, in your face feeling of their last full length. Still good, but not as good as their two brilliant LPs. (EA)

Out Punk! PO Box 170501, San Francisco, CA 94117

Team Satan-s/t, 7"

The cover artwork is pretty awesome, the music heavy, but the vocals and lyrics ruin it for me. Two songs, wow!! (NW)

Off White Records PO Box 408016 Chicago IL 60640

Templars-La Noche De Los Gavitos, 7"

"Night of the Seagulls, back from the dead to exact vengeance, Night of the Seagulls, those who've betrayed will be put to the Sword" Who takes this shit seriously???? "You want to know how many will be dead, just look at the beach and count all the heads"!!??? Yeah, it's super-catchy minimal classic '77-styled oi-street punk with great hooks, overlooking the fact that it's REALLY FUCKING STUPID. The First side fares better, teaming up the great music laden with excellent choruses and raw sing-a-long vocals with solid anti-authority lyrics. Two songs. 50/50. (KS)

Headache Records, PO Box 204, Midland Park, NJ 07432

Temporal Sluts-Broken Inside, 7"

Famous for being the other band on the Humpers 10". This is right up with that same stuff. Not really my favorite stuff though, kinda tinny and metally sounding. A band which shows promise. If you dig em, you will like this. (EA)

Demolition Derby/Nitro c/o Kris Verreth, Tervuursestwg.

Derholition Derby!/Nitro c/o Kris Verreth, Iervuursestwg 217, 1820 Perk, Belgium

Ten Foot Pole-Unleashed, CD

Every Epitaph release seems to give me a Pennywise record in one form or another. Catchy power punk that owes its sound to every other Epitaph release. Perfectly fine for a day when you feel like buying the newest Epitaph record, because Bad Religion doesn't have a new album out right now. (DC)

Epitaph Records, 2798 Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 900 26

Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo–All Ages Pie Eating Contest, 7"

The frantic pace of this whole record holds the whole thing together. Hyper trebly thrash from Massachusetts that would be reasonably generic if not delivered at such a manic speed. Proficient and catchy enough with shouted-in energetic choruses and dripping-to-the-floor snotty vocals. Six songs, no lyric sheet and I'm still mystified what a Pie eat-

ing contest has to do with anything on this record!!!! I'd get really sick eating Pie to this record.(KS)

Beer City Records, PO Box 26035, Milwaukee, WI 53226-0035

This Side Up / White Frogs-split, 7"

This side up hail from Italy and play fast melodic hardcore with intelligent lyrics that seem sincere. Two songs by them. White Frogs are from Brazil and play fast DIY hardcore punk with melody, but without sounding like another typical pop punk band. The only comparison I can come up with here is Corrupted Morals. Three songs on this side. (NW)

Alarma Records 2230 W. Belmont St. Apt. 3F Chicago JL 60618

Touchcandy-The Nights of Touchcandy, Part 1, CD

Good quality glam rock for people who take lots of drugs or who listen to the Legendary Pink Dots obsessively. Pretentious at times (okay, all the time) but pretty interesting. And at least a couple of songs, "Whore's Wash" and "Yellow Pages" are worth the price alone. (DC)

The Sceptic Tank, PO Box 26b97 Los Angeles, CA 90026

Traitors-No Friends, 7"

3 songs of pure raw punk rock. Superhero Zero is the standout track here, but all three are good for cranking up loud and stomping around your living room with an Oly in you hand to. Who are these guys? (MH)

Johanns Face PO Box 479-164 Chicago IL 60647

Trauma School Dropouts-Identity Crisis, LP

It amazes me that 20 years later, bands are still making carbon copies of British three-chord spiky-haired punk rock. It's even more ridiculous when an American band is doing it with a British accent. (SM)

Cacophone Records, PO Box 6058, Albany, NY 12206

Trepan Nation-S/T, 7"

This is ridiculous. A sXe band playing pop-punk. The first song has the predictable pounding stomping hardcore intro, then turns into what could be at best described as melodic hardcore with scratchy vocals. Not that I really need to pick apart the music, because whenever a straightedge band has a lyric like, "we are right and they are wrong," I instantly dismiss the whole project. Poo-poo on you. (SM)

Thug Life Records, 429 Circle Ave., Forest Park, IL 60130



Tripface-Some Part Sorrow, LP

occasionally caught myself tapping my foot to this out overall this is pretty generic metal-influenced hardcore that at times borders on being intense and cool but always lapses into repetitiveness (except for the song "Volition" which is a sort of slow, evil sounding number). I have to admit, the more I listen to this, the more I like it but the lyrics are so self-absorbed and ridiculous sounding (you suck, you stabbed me in the back) that I can't really take this too seriously. (KB)

Exit PO Box 263 New York, NY 10012

Turun Tauti-Neljä Palikka, LP

Straight ahead punk rock with Finnish lyrics. Kinda cool! (DS)

Free Animals PO Box 586 20301 Turku Finland

UK Subs-Quintessentials, LP

Pretty bad oi-political punk stuff with lyrics about iots. Like Rancid. (GG)

New Red Archives PO Box 210501 San Francisco, CA 94121

UK Subs-Riot, LP

Wow, this is not as bad as I thought it would be. I guess this is the newest by this UK punk band. These guys were around years ago and apparently are back. Pretty generic, but cool English punk that's till got an edge to it. A big surprise to me. (NW) Cleopatra 8726 Sepulveda Blvd. Ste - d - 82 Los Angeles CA 90045

Ultra Orange-Ride, 7"

Sounds like Smashing Pumpkins, only worse. (NW) no address

Underclass-A brief Moment of Clarity, 7"

Intricate minimal hardcore, delivered minus musical precision, but made up for by the gibberishly scalding vocals spewing lines like "For information on your nearest Sex Cult, get in touch with your Local Priest" or "I read that the new prison will overcome the harm to the local economy when the Army base closes". BORN AGAINST-styled sarcasm gone grindy. Seven songs. (KS)

Refusenik Records, PO Box 2018, Hove BN3 ENGLAND

Under Threat-Bomb Scars, LP

Reverberating DIS-CORE from Brazil. Primate Riff distortion noise in the DISCLOSE/BATTLE OF DISARM vein. Wonderfully noisy and pounding out direct four-sentence bleak political analysis through hoarse screams. The right kind of well intentioned four-sentence political analysis. None of these "Dis" bands ever seem to match the catchiness of early DISCHARGE material, but this follows the line of "Noise not Music" in mutating the sound into a completely warped noise-fest. Thirteen songs including a ALARM cover. (KS)

Low Life Records, Caixa Postal 6700, Sao Paulo, SP, 01064-970, BRAZIL

Union Blue/String Tricks-split 7"

The Union Blue side of this 7" goes down easy. Kinda light, kinda poppy in a Promise Ring way, it's quite nice, although the singer is too high in the mix for my tastes (this has been a recurring theme for me this issue). String Tricks, however, offer up a show stopper with their song "Airlock." Not completely unlike Samuel or JeJune, String Tricks offers up a beautiful song that's upbeat and yet oddly haunting. Hopefully a String Tricks 7" will be forthcoming. (DS)

Electric Field Dance PO Box 19394 Cincinnati OH 45219

The Unseen-Lower Class Crucifixion, LP

As overdone as the 01!/street punk style is, you have to hand it to a band when they do it well. The Unseen have enough of their own style to make this a good album. The songs are good and they genuinely sound angry and sincere, despite how much they look like a cartoon with their leather, spikes, boots and pointy hair. Fans of this stuff should check this out. (SM)

V.M L., PO Box 183, Franklin Park, IL 60131

Useless I.D-Useless, 7"

This sounds like pretty much everything else I've eviewed in this issue. (MD)

Sellout Records 486 Magellan Ave., SF, CA 94116

Uuluus-Everything's Shit, 7"

Uutuus hail from Finland and this 13 song EP combines their hard to find compilation tracks. Don't let the multitude of songs scare you, Uutuus are short and sweet and the sound quality on this record is good. I like the packaging too, as it provides lyrics and translations and lots of pictures. Great pessimistic hardcore. (SY)

(Prank, PO Box 410892, San Francisco, CA 94141-0892)

Vampire Lezbos-We're the Men in Black, 7"

Crunchy guit punk with lyrics about conspiracy theories. Cool subject matter, but nothing ass shakin' musically. MY girlfriend thought they sounded like Kiss. (GG)

Dubious Honor Records PO Box 5134 Portland, ME 04101

The Vegas Beat-s/t, LP

Brilliant! This is Marci's, the old drummer for Team Dresch (how many is that now?), new band. There are three people listed as being on this record, but I could have sworn they were a two piece. Go figure. Anyway, it's totally fucking beautiful. Team Dresch references can't be avoided, as some of the songs have a vaguely TD feel (coming mostly from the vocals, which sound a lot like Jody), but The Vegas Beat offers a slower groove than Team Dresch does, and it works. The Vegas Beat works in contrasts, starting a song all moody & quiet and slowly building it up to a fantastic, uplifting crescendo, before bringing you back down again. It's exhilarating. (DS) Candy Ass PO Box 42382 Portland OR 97242

Violent Society-split, 7"

A good paring of old styled hardcore bands from Pennsylvania. VIOLENT SOCIETY adding complexity and length to a keyed-up hardcore sound really similar to the first POI-SON IDEA record-the guitar tone is a dead ringer!! THE BOILS cut loose with a more melodic, guitar driven punk attack. The three songs each from both bands have well written yrics about work, security, roles and tradition. THE BOILS side is actually titled Tradition Ends", but features a dog with a mohawk on the record label, and the VIO-LENT SOCIETY side has a baby with a mohawk. Who's tradition? A powerful record, but as "traditional" to a two decade old, albeit good formula, as it gets! (KS)

\$3,50 PPD to Schuykill Records, PO BOX 42346, Philadelphia, PA. 19101

The VSS-Nervous Circuits CD

Strange stuff. Reminds me of something that would be on Touch & Go and an early 80s New Wave band. The consistent sound on this album is an eerie one due to the appearance of the Roland synths. There are times when they music gets loud, but it usually stays mellow and melodic. As a four piece I can't figure out how they would pull this sound off live, but I would love to see them. Awesome John Yates artwork. (SY)

(Honey Bear Records, PO Box 460346, San Francisco, CA 94141-0346)

Walker-?

Excellent pop punk that is kinda like Sicko without as many hooks. Very enjoyable listening, with bubbly bass parts, fairly solid drumming, nice buzzy guitars, and smooth vocals with nice backup harmonies. They do a Cringer cover on this, so maybe that gives some clue to where they're coming from. (MH)

Harmless Records 1437 W. Hood Chicago IL 60660

Wayne Kramer-Citizen Wayne, LP

Hoo doggy....did Brett Gurewitz just put out the new Stone Temple Pilots record?

Oooops....this isn't Wyland, it's Wayne Kramer. Either way, this sucks. I know the old timers will criticize me, cuz I don't respect Wayne and all that MC5/White Panther shit. Well, kiss my ass! All I care about is rocking, and this thing doesn't approach that. (GG)

Epilaph 2798 Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles, CA

Whatever...-Snack Time, 7"

Above average pop punk on this nice little 7". I think the cover of Berlin's "the Metro" really won it for me... that's one of my favorite 80s songs! The band has better than decent production, and a really tight sound throughout the four songs. Check this one out and like it. I command you. (JP)

Doctor strange Records PO Box 7000-117 Alta Lonia, Ca 91701

Whopper Breath / Mental Pygmies-split,

This record has gotten a lot of attention for the following title tracks: Slut, Bitch, Good For Nothing Piece of shit Bum! And Big Ball of Fucking Shit!. Two very similar bands, really metally hard core, produced with a crew feeling. Got to admit the lyrics didn't bother me and neither did the naked girl on the cover. It wasn't a big deal in any way. Not the best Probe release. (EA)

Prope Records PO Box 5068 Pleasanton, CA 94566

Woiczech/Sarcasm, split, 7"

The multiple tracks from Germany's WOJCZECH teeter at the edge of the grind/hardcore blurring boundary. Rooted in speedy hardcore, but screeching and grunting the vocals to maximum extremes on a chassis of precision-made metal noise, like Early NAPALM DEATH. UK'S SARCASM charge with three tracks of classic late '80s UK hardcore ala' DOOM, RIPCORD and E.N.T..

and end with an ANTI-CIMEX cover. Rampaging hardcore with lyrics like "To end this confusion I must sustain, vast amount of alcohol flowing through my veins". Uh......there's a couple anti-Religion and Expression of Freedom Sentiments expressed as well.(KS)

Harmmerwerk C/o Dietmar Eicher, Allerheiligenplatz 11/87, A-1200 Vienna, AUSTRIA

Worthless-The Revenge Of Dr. Stanley, 7"

Very cool- this is the sort of band that caught my attention to punk in the first place, and is the sort of band that keeps me interested in punk years and years later. Why? Because you can tell the band is having fun playing the music, and it's upbeat, fast and well, for lack of a better description, punk rock! It's bands like this, who write, "we never changed it because we're dumb and it's fun to play" about their songs that make it all worthwhile, ya know? I like. (JP) Anurysm 3 Kendal Court Marlton, NJ 08053

Wuhling-Extra, LP

This is awful. Rock and roll with female vox designed for MTV listeners. (NW)
Touch and Go

The Wynona Riders-Artificial Intelligence, CD

This band changes styles a lot on this five song CD. Their strong moments are when they sound vaguely goth influenced, such as on the song "Masquerade" and "Corrupted". Those two songs really stood out, and I think the goth influence came from the vocals and song structure. The other three songs seem a little grunge rock influenced, but no matter what, the band manages to maintain a punk edge throughout the CD. I like it. (JP)

Lookout! POB 11374 Berkeley, CA 94712

Yeti Girls-Kitty Train, LP

Wacky German punk rock. Speedy guitars and pounding drums make you bop your head up and down whether you want to or not. Silly version of Madonna's Material Girl included. Get this album. (MH)

Wolverine Records Benrather SchloBufer 63 40593 Dusseldorf Germany

ZAO-The Splinter Shards The Birth Of Separation, CD

Christian grindcore. Yup, that's what I said. The music is, well, grindcore, so if you like that you'll appreciate the music. The lyrics are paens to God. Sort of like early Godflesh in a bizarro universe. (DC) Tooth & Nail Records, PO Box 12696, Seattle, WA 98111

V/A-10 Ans D'Abus, CD

This comes with a zine (see zine reviews). As the title indicates (in French), this compilation is ten years of the magazine/label or whatever. It's diverse. There's every style from rock to jazz to lounge to bland college rock to punk to melodic hardcore to blues and the list goes on. The only band I recognized was Les Thugs, but this is from France so what do you expect. An interesting project. (SM)

Abus Dangereux, BP 172, 82001, Montauban Cedex, France

V/A-And California Sank into the Sea, 7"

This is a Tucson, Arizona four-band compilation. The Lovers play speedy sloppy punk that sounds a lot like Toe To Toe. Zero Tolerance Task Force sound like Sesame Street on bad drugs. Disabled Superman play speedy sloppy pop-punk. And Jason's Cat Died disappointed with a typical noisy hardcore song, nowhere near as good as their two song 7". The concept of this comp is cool, but the content leaves something to be desired ... like good music. (SM)

Bardwagon Records, PO Box 44338, Tucson, AZ 85733-4338

V/A-Art of The State, CD

Decent compilation of various bands, including
Deep 13, Radioflier, Bitchslap and others. Pretty
decent (and pretty diverse) collection. (DC)
Major Label Records, PO Box 2203 Gaithersburg, MD
20886

V/A-Beat the Meatles, 7"

Oh no! this is utterly horrible. Four Beatles covers, and I shouldn't even retell this listen. Why on Earth (or this universe) would three poppy rock and roll bands: The Gain, The Kindred and the Decibels put this out? Very, very low on energy. Isn't that what the original Beatles sound was all about. Put this in the "Never to be found again pile.

G.I. Productions

V/A-The Big Fix, CD

Another comp full of Allied approved bands. You get: Cards in Spokes, Discount, J Church, Rail, V. Card plus many more (22 in all). Allied does one thing good and that is compilations. Thumbs up for what I like to call Allied rock, it is sorta soft on the punk side and never too dull. (EA)

Allied Recordings PO Box 460683 San Francisco, CA 94146

It amazes me that 20 years later, bands are still making carbon copies of British three-chord spiky-haired punk rock.

V/A- Check This Out Baby, CD

One Foot Records has put together this lovely sampler of their bands for us to listen to and enjoy. This label has a lot of great bands on it and I'd say throwing them all on one CD is a good way to sell some of their records. Some of the bands included on this 18 song CD are All You Can Eat, Latex Generation, Buglite, Migraines, Punkture, Racer Fen and Horace Pinker. Good stuff that ranges from pop punk to emo punk on this one. (JP)
One Foot Records 92 Marine Place Howick Auckland New Zeland

V/A-(don't forget to) Breathe, CD

Almost a whole CD of hardcore-meets-indie-rock type bands. The ratio of sucky songs to good songs is firmly in the favor of the good songs. Some of the better ones include tunes done by The Promise Ring, Ethel Mezerve, Christie Front Drive, Knapsack, Silver Scooter, Prozac Memory, Vitreous Humor, Mineral, Seven Storey Mountain, Boy's Life and Drive Like Jehu. Other bands appearing here are Fireside, Grander, Hot Water Music, Roadside Monument, Uni-V and Uncrush. The Promise Ring's song, "Pink Chimneys," is my new favorite of theirs. Recommended. (SM)

Crank!, 1223 Wilshire Blvd., #173, Santa Monica, CA

V/A-Death To False Metal, CD

90403

Punk doing metal compilations have always turned me off. The bands covering the songs usually regard metal as a novelty and put forth softened up versions to the punk kids who know nothing about the stuff. These "Pat Boone" versions usually forsake important licks and solos that are very essential to the originals. Not so with Death To False Metal. This rocks. What you have here are punk rockers acknowledging their metal roots. Along with great songs, solos are present as are the harmonic accompaniments to the basic riffs. Bands present on this compilation are Fuckface, KPF, Schlong, Your Mother and other greats. Nothing polished about the tunes, yet this makes me wants to take my denim out. 80s METAL rules and don't ever let anyone tell you different. (SY)

(Probe Records, PO Box 5068, Pleasanton, CA 94566)

V/A-Draggin Tracks, CD

Eighteen bands (twenty on the CD) all thrown onto a compilation for some reason. I don't see a real connection, they all sound kind of droning and mid-tempo. No big bands, which is actually a good thing, it doesn't seem to be all throw away tracks (a rarity in comps with BIG bands). I just don't see the drag racing motif working. Fast cars should have fast music. The songs are good though, a nice comp. It just isn't a racing comp. More like a Taurus wagon comp. Maybe the draggin = slow. Bands include: Standard, Garland, Martian, The Trans Ams, Bossk, The Unabombers, the Valvestems and more. (EA)

Meat Records PO Box 10203, Fargo, ND 58106

V/A-Empty Sampler 2, LP

A lot to like here....Empty is one of the great labels in the land — the Motards, Crackerbash, Sicko, Gas Huffer, Scared of Chaka, the Derelicts, the Fumes, Sinister Six! Boyoboy! A great sampling of what they're about, with some OK unreleased stuff from the Motards, Sicko, Crackerbash, and the X-tays. Any punks with taste would want this something fierce. (GG)

Empty Records PO Box 12034 Seattle, WA 98102

V/A-Generations I, LP

Pretty lame West Coast comp to "benefit" human rights or something. All the usual names — the Vandals, Pennywise, etc. (GG) Ark 21 3520 Hayden Ave., Culver City, CA 90232

V/A-Go Kart Vs. the Corporate Giant, CD

Lots of bands, some good, some bad. As far as I can tell, this label has always been a mixed bag, so you never really know what you'll be getting. The cool things? Unreleased Weston, Sleepasaurus and Lunachicks tracks, as well as some released songs from Doc Hopper, Voluptuous Horror Of Karen Black, and LES Stitches. The bad points are certainly herem but I usually like the idea of big comps like this (28 songs) because it gives people a chance to discover some new bands or old ones they missed. (JP)

Go Kart PO Box 20 Prince Street Station, NY, NY 10012

V/A-Instrumental Fire, LP

Sub-par instro album. Pays tribute to Link, Duane and the Ventures. Go to Best Buy and find the originals and then pick this up. Ain't no point in hearing the imitation unless your schooled. Los Straitjackets, The Bomboras, Man or Astroman, and the Tiki Men stand out. Sixteen bands in all. (EA) Musick Recordings 202 West Essex Avenue, Lansdowne, PA 19050

V/A-Left For Dead, LP

Comes with Chumpire no. 76 which is nothing but an insert for the record as far as I can tell. This is a comp of Pennsylvania bands. Boy did I have to put my all into trying to find a good song on this (and I failed though some songs sounded OK relative to the other songs but were still really bad). I think this is the only comp I've ever heard that I couldn't listen to a single song on all the way through. What an absolute disaster of a record. The packaging is really cool (fragile paper cover, bingo game, stickers) but boy do the tunes blow. You get the picture. (KB)

\$5 ppd PO Box 680 Conneaut Lake, PA 16316

V/A-Mondo Drive-In, LP

Cool garage comp with a 3-D cover. Has the Boss Martians, Satan's Pilgrim's, etc. You get the idea.....(GG)

Blood Red Vinyl and Discs 2134 NE 25th, Portland, OR 97212

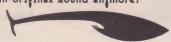
V/A-Number One Priority, CD

An eclectic sampler of bands and styles. One song each from BLACK TRAIN JACK, IGNITE, LAST CALL, DECKARD, HAN-KSHAW and five others from primarily the Northeastern U.S. Running the gamut from pure straight-up Straight-edge hardcore to complete Emo to indy pop, all remarkably consistent of high quality within the style and maintaining pretty decent sound quality. (KS) American Machine Records, 28 Spring Street, Steeltown, PA 17118

V/A Our Scene Still Sucks, 7"

This is a comp of 5 Nashville bands. Brown Towel kind of has a slow grunge-like sound with lots of hi-hat. The song is so slow and droney I have nothing I can compare it to. The Situation No Win song sounds very much like Jawbreaker toward the end and the rest of the song sounds just like a fast popbunk band I've listened to recently (Monsula?). Junkie War Stories is 80s punk/HC with dumb lyrics (the song is called 'I Like to Kick"). If they're a joke band, it's pretty funny. Fast, low-decibel snarly vocals, Pink Lincoln's plus some "whoa's makes for the Vibes. Process is Dead is screamy fast chaotic moshcore hardcore with some toned down clean guitar parts reminiscent of heavy metal ballads (not in a bad way). Quite an eclectic comp, I'd say. (KB)

House O' Pain PO Box 120861 Nashville, TN 37212



V/A-Panic Now, CD

An above average comp of melodic punk tracks from a slew of European bands, with 3 or 4 well known US bands thrown onto the CD as well. This sucker has tunes from Miriamplace, Vader's, NoFX, Beat-offs, Not Available, Good Riddance, Punkreas, and 9 others. A good sample of some cool bands from Europe. (MH)

Panic Records c/o Helter Skelter Via degli Ausoni, 84 - 00185 Roma, Italy

V/A-Phelpsy Destroyer, 7"

This is a Rhode Island punk compilation, says the record. Three bands make up Rhode island punk and they are Mole People, FTD's and Toss Offs. All three bands are pretty upbeat, poppy and fast, and all sound pretty much the same. None of the bands are bad, mind you, but it sounds like one band doing six songs. All in all, Rhode island needs some variety. (JP)

Owen Records 47 Waldo Street Pawtucket, RI 02860

VA-Punk and Surf for Dummies, 7"

Two bands on this 7". Blockhead are fast pop punk with silly lyrics about Mt. Dew and a geek looking for love. Woah-oh-oh vocals and decent buzzsaw guitars. The Kosmo Kramers are full-on surf with reverby instruments and that wonderful surf beat. While the bands don't exactly fit together on this 7", each is really quite good at what they do. (MH)

V/A-Rumors From The Air-Conditioned Tiger Pit, CD

I put this CD in and I feel like I'm at the Warped Tour. Actually, none of these bands played at the Warped Tour but a lot of them sound like the bands that do. Why? Is it that hard to come up with an original sound anymore? Is it that hard to write about more then punk rock and your scene? 13 bands represented on this one. I'll give credit to the Wurst tracks for being the best tracks. I liked the Kretins' tracks for having a cool Beach Boys sound. I hated the D.U.I tracks for being stupid and in love with their peters, while calling girls whores. The most enjoyable thing on this compilation are the song introductions. (SY)

(Rotten House Records, PO Box 12705, Reading, PA 19612-2705)

V/A-Sawmill

This is a Wisconsin comp of bands I've never heard of. No lyric sheet was included and there is very minimal information about the bands. Not a very enjoyable listen for me; some of the bands are punk, others just suck. (NW)

Erosion Records PO Box 701 Appelton WI 54912

V/A-Seventeen and a Half is Still Jailbait, CD

You know compilations normally contain a lot of filler and throw away tracks. I am afraid that there is some here on this disc. BUT, this is a worthy purchase scratch a couple tunes. Electric Frankenstein do it tops, Panty Boy do a great song and my favorite surprise goes to Dammit. With 17 and a half songs, you get a lot. Many Spanish and Norwegian bands that are excellent when they tend to steer away from the metal riffs. (EA)

Demolition Derby!/Nitro c/o Kris Verreth, Tervuursestwg 217, 1820 Perk, Belgium

V/A-Show & Tell, A Stormy Remembrance Of TV Theme Songs, CD

Ooh! I saw this one and was struck with delight. 35 covers of TV Themes? For me? This is one of the best collections I've seen of theme song covers (and I'm always seeking them, so I have seen a lot). Let's see.. favorites? Tilt's "Where In The World Is Carmen San Diego?", Pink Lincoln's "Friends", H2O's "Cops", The Dickies "Secret Agent Man", Furious George's "The Monkees", Joyride's "Slinky" (commercial), No Use For A Name's "Munsters", Latex Generations "The Jeffersons" and Thirsty's "It's Garry Shandling's Show". Everyone needs a copy of this. It's really a lot of fun! (JP)

hich? Records PO Box 659 Village Station New York, NY 10014

V/A-Socket, CD

A collection of Midwestern (mostly Wisconsin) punk and indie rock bands, with the emphasis on indie rock. This disc has decent, but not essential, tracks from Boris the Sprinkler, Ex-action Figures, Fez Petting Zoo, Dis-, and more. Altogether, a good sample of (mostly) unknown Midwestern talent. (MH)

The Lombardi Recording Company PO Box 2564 Madison WI 53701-2564

V/A-Team Mint, CD

Canada's finest pop punk label has thrown together this lovely assortment of their bands. Featured are Cub, Huevos Rancheros, The Smugglers, Maow, Duotang, The Mr. T Experience, Gob, Pansy Division, and Groovie Ghoulies .You're not really getting any unreleased material here, but you are getting the feel of a great mix tape, which is just what you need sometimes. It's also a good intro to the label, for those that aren't familiar with all the bands. (JP)

Mint Records PO Box 3613, MPO, Vancouver, BC Canada V6B 3Y6

V/A-Teenage Kicks, CD

This is one of a million pop-punk compilations that plagues the earth these days (a genre that survives on the pockets of an everlasting supply of 15 year old, purple haired kids.) This came out in 1995 as a ten-inch and a bonus 7" for some. This also includes nine tracks. I heard this comp a few years back and passed it off as another throw away collection (like many comps). Well, you won't listen anyways, it contains the heavyweights: FYP, Parasites, Propaghandi, Squirtgun, Rythmn Collision and my favorite the Fondled. If for some reason you need more of these bands, I guess get it. (EA)

Liberation Records PO Box 17746 Anaheim, CA 92817

V/A-Un Tributo a Minor Threat, CD

Spanish bands covering Minor Threat. I am not sure about his one. Haven't listen to Minor Threat for a long, long time. A little on the metal side, but fun in that many songs are done in Spanish, makes them sound funny to this guy. I can picture a Spanish II class singing these songs at the H.S. Fun, but to often the songs stay very true to the originals. (EA)

B-Core Disc Apt. Correus 35.221 08080 Barcelona, Spain

V/A-World Hardcore 2X7"

I give respect to the label for putting out a 7" of all European hardcore and punk; that stuff is usually hard to sell to most Americans into hardcore. The bands are from Poland, Finland, Germany, France, Italy, etc. Six bands in all on this double 7": Undone, Vanilla, Olotita, Respect, Deadbeat, and Eversor. Support hardcore from all parts of the globe and buy this 7". (NW)

Moo Cow Records PO Box 616 Madison WI 53701



ecently, I got a letter about this video

company called Provisional. When I

read the letter, I thought "Finally, someone who is taking really good films that are falling through the cracks and making sure they get some exposure!" Provisional takes the concept of the DIY record label and extends it to video. The company's founder, Joe Carducci, worked for SST records in the '80s and wrote the rock criticism book, Rock and the Pop Narcotic (2-13-68 Books). Provisional releases some of my favorite indie films, So Wrong They're Right and Bullet on a Wire [see review in PP171.

So Wrong They're Right is done by Russ Forster and Dan Sutherland. This film won second place Best Feature Documentary at the Chicago Underground Film Festival. Writer/director/tour guide Russ puts out a zine called 8-Track Mind about collecting 8-track tapes. SWTR is the cinematic version of the zine, a witty and spirited cross-country trek through the world of 8-track collectors.

You might think to yourself, "How interesting could this possibly be?" But there's something about people's obsessions that can really warm your heart. All the interviewees are intelligent, witty, slightly cynical and have such a great passion that by the film's end, you think that 8-track collectors must be the most interesting group around! Intercut with funky titles and Russ' fantastic narrative, you meet the Chicago guy who tells how listening to 8-tracks helped him get a girlfriend, a Seattle guy who shows us how to fix an 8-track tape; the funky Portland '70s queen who recounts how her 8-track obsession got her banned from the Goodwill for life; the guy in Sparks, Nevada who earns up to \$1000 a month selling 8-track tapes; superband Gumball atop their colossal pile of 8-tracks; Cambridge's own king of zine layout, Phil Milstein; and the hysterical New York 'go-go librarian' who is also a swinging 8-track chick. We see her and Russ trying to track down William Lear (of Lear Jet fame) because he was the one who supposedly invented the 8-track. We also get to

see a cornucopia of cheesy 8-tracks from Elvis at Madison Square Garden to Rick Dees' Disco Duck to Belly Dance Au Go Go to Telly Savalas (yes, Kojak!) to Jimmy and Kristy McNichol to the Sex Pistols' Never Mind the Bollocks (which goes for \$100 on 8track!). This movie is an essential for all music fans, whether you're a "tracker" or not.

Also on the Provisional roster are videos by Raymond Pettibon, who is mostly known for his famous drawings. You've probably seen his stuff as punk rock fliers during the '80s, or his cover art for most of the records by Black Flag (and Sonic Youth's Goo), but his artwork has also appeared in museums and galleries all over the world. Provisional carries four of Pettibon's videos, Weathermen '69: The Whole World is Watching starring Kim Gordon, Thurston Moore and Mike Watt; Citizen Tania about Patty Hearst, starring Pat Smear; Judgement Day Theater: The Book of Manson; and Sir Drone, starring Mike Watt and Mike Kelly (the artist who did Sonic Youth's Dirty record art). Out of these, Sir Drone is the one that really stands out. Weathermen and Tania have amazing dialogue and cool rock stars, but they are really hard to take all in one sitting. Pettibon actually intended this, reasoning that video is more like a novel that you can put down and pick up when you want. But Sir Drone made me want to pick up a video camera and fuck shit up.

Shot on VHS in two days, Sir Drone focuses on Dwayne (Mike Watt) and Jinx (Mike Kelly) who are trying to start a band. They jam out in their practice space/crash pad, carve "Dils" in their backs with a razor blade, drink beer, give each other homemade tattoos, hang out at the front door of the Masque (all you ever see is a blank front door), smash Peter Frampton records and try out a string of losers for their band. It took me about 20 minutes to really get into the



by Sarah Jacobson

story once I realized that it was mostly Mikes Watt and Kelly reading dialog off of cue cards in the background in only two locations, but the dialog is so funny, poking fun at the L.A. punk scene in the early '80s, and the characters become so charming—Mike Kelly's earnest innocence and Mike Watt's cool-but-easily-awed attitude—that you fall in love with the film.

Sir Drone is a great example of how you can make a really great film with totally limited resources.

You can order *Sir Drone* and Pettibon's other titles by sending \$20 pp to Provisional, Laramie, Wyoming 82073-0757. *So Wrong They're Right* is available for \$25 from the same address. Send a SASE for Provisional's full catalog.

...

And speaking of great films made on limited resources, Dave Markey has restarted his company, We Got Power Films, to rerelease his classic masterpieces Desperate Teenage Lovedolls and the turbosequel Lovedoll Superstar. If you're into punk rock films, these are an absolute must.

Desperate Teenage Lovedolls follows Kitty, Bunny and Patch as they escape the suburbs and hit the streets of L.A. doing anything to get their band, the Lovedolls, to the top. They pickpocket, steal guitars from the homeless, sleep in bus stations and shoot dope to the soundtrack of Redd Kross, Black Flag, the Nip Drivers and the Brady Bunch theme song. Jeff McDonald from Redd Kross puts in a stellar performance as the coke-snortin', girl-raping agent scumbag Johnny Tremaine—check out his rad drug freakout scene! Desperate Teenage Lovedolls is always interesting and it almost always makes sense, a nearly impossible feat for underground films! The filmmaking is so inventive and creative, it was an instant sensation as soon as it hit the streets.

Capitalizing on *Desparate*'s success, *Lovedoll Superstar* starts with the Lovedolls crawling out of the gutter and utilizing their Manson-like power over their groupies to get back on top. Nothing is sacred—they even spoof the cult classic *The Legend of Billy Jack*!

To order send \$19 pp for each tape to We Got Power Films, PO Box 46702, Los Angeles CA 90046 or check out their website at www.geocities.com/Hollywood/Lot/2680/ which features a great essay on the making of the two films. Also, Sympathy for the Record Industry is re-releasing the soundtrack, so you can play it and pretend that you're a Lovedoll Superstar in your own bedroom!

•••

As for a modern day example of this DIY film spirit, one can turn to the amazing Angels? by superstar-in-his-own-mind Tommy!, who also did a zine called Tommy! The script was taken word for word from a Jack Chick tract, the little comic books which spread the word of Jesus and condemns everything from drugs, homosexuality, and Catholism as satanic. In Angels?, rock 'n' roll is the enemy—even Christian rock. The story follows the Green Angels, a Christian rock group who are going nowhere until they hook up with an agent called Mr. Siffer, who takes them to the top. The seriousness in

the way the film presents itself only adds to the side-splitting irony of Jack Chick's words being brought to life by decadent, rock worshipping former art students. Shot by Aimee Pavy, who also produced and edited the film, the shots are laid out like a comic book, with Satan having all the low angle shots, bathed in red light, and the band seen from a high angle, swathed in green. The grainy look with badly dubbed dialog just adds to the aesthetic. The ending is hilarious. But be careful—Angels? might just make you give up punk rock music and follow the word of the Lord!

...

Also, if you're looking for inspiration on bare bones filmmaking, there are two new books out that bring the un-glamour out from under a rock and looks at the lives of seminal, struggling visionaries. The first is Nick Zedd's *Totem of the Depraved* (2-13-68 Books) which chronicles his life in New York's Lower East Side and the European tour of his films. Nick takes himself very seriously and leads the total decadent tortured lifestyle. He's such a punk.

Reflections of a Cinematic Cesspool (Zanja Press) by twin brothers George and Mike Kuchar is a fascinating account of the duo that influenced Warhol, John Waters and David Lynch. I've only read the first half of the book so far, being George's autobiographical account (the second half is Mike's tale in his own words). It's so inspiring to read about George's childhood, his passion to make 8 mm films using neighborhood stars, his and his brother's ascent to (relative) stardom in the NY '60s art film scene, and his drastic move out to San Francisco. He has taught at the SF Art Institute for the last 20 years where he gets to corrupt batch after batch of new students in his class productions (he was my teacher and he rocks!) George also does a series of personal videos, releasing 15 videos a year.

There's lots of information on George's hobbies, like weather, UFOs, his swinging lifestyle in the '70s, his bowel movements and his rubbing elbows with the big-wigs through former student Christopher Coppolla. But the best reason to buy this book is the series of essays on low budget filmmaking, offering advice on everything from lighting to make-up to cinematography to writing. *Reflections* may be harder to track down if you're not in a big city, but you can probably get your bookstore to order it from the Last Gasp catalog.

•••

And finally, I've heard many great things about a video store called *Cinemania* in Sacramento. I got this cool letter via e-mail from Leesa G, one of the owners who was also a founding member in the cool chick L.A. band, the Creamers.

"We opened Cinemania on Nov 29, 1996. Our idea was to open a store that would be full of the kind of movies we like, exploitation, blaxploitation, sexploitation, drive-in T&A, horror, martial arts, asian trash cinema, Hong Kong cinema, mondo, nudie cuties, gore, cult, b-movies, shlock, sci-fi, 70's adult films, etc. Cinemania offers

everything that Blockbuster and Tower don't. We also carry a lot of obscure and rare posters, lobby cards, over 75 different b-movie t-shirts, and other movie memorabilia.

"When we were opening the store, all of our suppliers and distributors thought we were nuts, and treated us like shit. Our sales reps at the video distributors, (who are supposed to be there to service us), would get this real fucking paternal 'you-don'tknow-what-you-are-doing-so-let-me-tell-you-howto-run-your-store' attitude and they would tell us we HAD to have copies of Forest Gump and First Wives Club and Braveheart or we would be out of business in the first month. Now that the store has been open and actually TURNING A PROFIT [!!!!!] for almost 8 months. Now, the fucking sales reps actually follow R.J. [co-owner and hubby] and I through the video warehouses to see what we are buying! They are so narrow-minded and disconnected from what's hip they can't figure out how we are able to rent things like Blood Feast or 2000 Maniacs. It drives them crazy [because] they know there is a market out there and that they could be getting more money for certain movies, but they just don't know the difference between Tombs of the Blind Dead and Batman.

"We have had two in-store appearances at Cinemania, Tura Satana was here on Dec 14, 1996 and Rudy Ray Moore [Dolemite] was here in March 1997. Both of these stars were extremely gracious and charming: The Groovie Ghoulies have done an acoustic show here and starting tomorrow night, every Wednesday night from 8-10 pm we are hosting the 'Cinemania Trailer Trash Hootenanny', with local and not-so-local bands and musicians doing acoustic sets. We are serving pork rinds, squirty cheese in the can, marshmallow kabobs, kool aid and baloney sandwiches.

"We also show movies for free every Monday night at 8pm at a local bar here in Sacto called Old Ironsides. Some of the movies we've shown include: Bloodsucking Freaks, Revenge of the Cheerleaders, Texas Chainsaw Massacre, Rock & Roll Highschool, Thunder Road, 1990 Bronx Warriors and Common Law Cabin. In about two months our web site will be up and open for business. We will be offering over 3,000 new and previously viewed movies for sale as well as over 300 posters and about 75 different t-shirts."

Cinemania is located at 2125 J St, Sacto, CA 95816. Store hours: M-Sat noon-10 pm, Sun noon-8 pm, Phone: (916) 448-9874, Fax: (916) 448-3495. By now their website at www.videojones.com should be up so check it out.

Good luck Leesa and R.J! We need more stores like yours!

•••

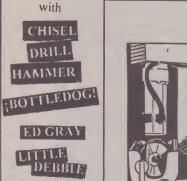
If you want to send me any info on cool films, stores, books, etc. mail it to Station Wagon Productions, P.O. Box 471807, San Francisco, CA 94147 or email at SWPchick@aol.com. I also have a website at www.sirius.com/~lenny/maryj2.html. Until next time!

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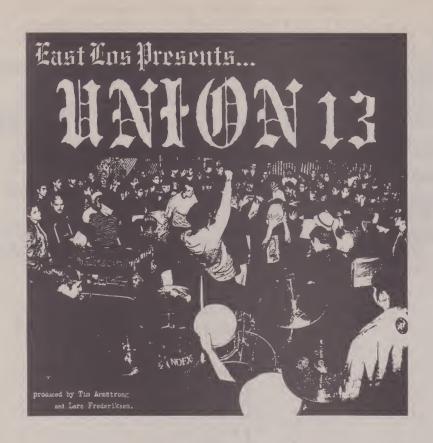
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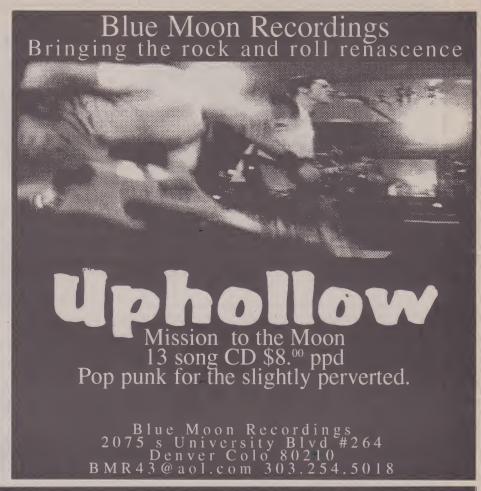


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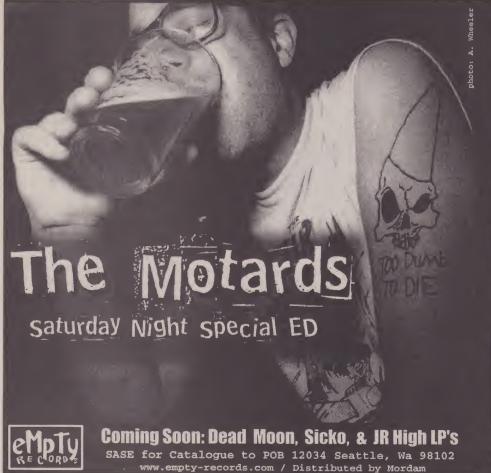
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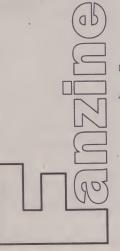




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Summer brings a thinner review section thanks to a number of our zine reviewers taking off without telling us (brainy move, guys). **Apologies to those** not reviewed, you'll be in next issue. This issue's reviewers: Brian Czarnik (BC) Eric Action (EA) Joan Pixie (JP)

Kim Bae (KB) Scott MacDonald (SM) Dan Sinker (DS) Seattle, WA 98109



10 Things Jesus Wants You to Know #16

This one came with a CD, but I am sure they are all gone, maybe not. God stuff with 33 NW punk bands. This is another essential zine, but falls into the typical zine format (like PP). Columns, Ads, reviews and interviews with Chokebore, Scared of Chaka, Monster Truck Driver. (EA) \$2 8315 Lake City Way NE #192, Seattle, WA 98115

59 cents #18, March/April 1997

The common thread throughout this zine is a subtle sort of manic strangeness, if that makes any sense at all. It's just a random collection of writings, but there's a sort of unselfconciousness that makes it work. There's commentary on ads, and videos, and stuff on TV like this ultra-right-wing talk show called "In The Name of Satan" ("This man is so far over the edge that there's no coming back.") A column by Dr. Ward Mental is full of spiritual inspiration; "Remember, life is not precious, it's

just another shit-filled excuse to cause more abuse." The only clunker is a long, rambling, addled collection of misinformation and tired rhetoric about something or other - all I could tell for sure is that somebody is pissed and he thinks society is to blame. Overall, though, this zine's a winner. (JC) \$1 ppd; PO Box 19806,

A Punk Kid Walks Into A Bar #7

This decent zine fills us with Misfit lyrics, twelve flaws with the Star Wars Trilogy (mine being that there was still no nudity!), Lifetime, and some record reviews. This is a

nice zine to read and the writer is like the kid that goes to all the shows and his opinions are interesting enough to listen to. (BC)

Free! A Punk Kid...PO Box 254 Rye, Ny. 10580

Abaddon #4

This definitely had a unique style and personality - something a lot of zines lack. There are little fold-out panels separating different sections of the zine and these computer-generated political John Yates type full-page graphics. Critical and in depth book reviews, a frank and sad story about domestic abuse, interviews with Overcast (OK), John Yates (really good and informative), and Catharsis (excellent), a creepy short story, and

reviews make up the rest of the content. This zine is well done and neatly laid out and is definitely worth it at the very least for the John Yates and Catharsis interviews. (KB)

\$2 12039 UNCG Station Greensboro, NC 27413

Absolut #1

I actually did attempt to read this (it's in Spanish) but given that the amount of material I have to review this time around has more than doubled, I really (unfortunately) did not have the time to read this whole thing so I'll just list what is in it. Profiles on the Descendents, Manifesto, and Jawbox, interviews with Mainstrike, Sick of it All, Xmilk, and State Route 522, reviews, and some pretty good columns from what I can tell. It's copied on 100% recycled paper (more zines should do this!) and is really nicely and cleanly laid out. Sorry I can't say much more about this. (KB)

100 pts B-Core Apd. Co. 35.395 08080 Barcelona, Spain

Abus Dangereux, April/May 97

This is a the ten-year anniversary issue of this slick zine written entirely in French — a language which, unfortunately for this review, I pretty much failed in high school. It's laid out well, packed with content, has interviews with 16

Horsepower, Bastard, Young Gods, Unwound, New Christs, Tantrum, The Make Up, Straw Dogs, Hellacopters and the Descendants, and it comes with a compilation CD (see record reviews). A cool project which I can't read a word of. (SM) Abus Dangereux, BP 172, 82001, Montauban Cedex, France \$5

Adge #4

When I first picked this up, I thought, "wow, cool. A zine from Singapore," but some of the attitudes in this zine are so fucked up and ignorant I absolutely can't lend my support to it. The most prominent example is shown in a review of a zine called Xerox. A quote from Xerox basically says that a female who dresses sexy invites rape so it is stupid to blame the rapist. There is an ad for Xerox in Adge in addition to a column from Xerox's editor. His column ends with the words: "Liberate the animals!" Apparently this guy thinks eating meat is a worse crime than rape. I notice the typical no sexist, racist, or homophobic contributions accepted disclaimer was not present in the solicitation part of the intro. I don't think any zine that tolerates this sort of bullshit or gives a voice to an overtly sexist pig should be supported so I'm not going to even say what else is in the zine. (KB) unfortunately, I have to print the address \$2 BLK24 Telok Blangah Cres, #02 14 Singapore 090024

Amusing Yourself to Death #2

Here it is, a smaller Factsheet Five with longer zine

reviews. For those three of you who haven't heard of FS5, it's an all-zinereview zine, essentially, and an important resource. I'm glad to see AYTD for a couple reasons — it's smaller in scale and scope (FS5 does get a little unwieldy) and the editor writes really long reviews. You can tell the guy has read the zines and really cares about them, and about small press in general. Plus, it's monthly. Thumbs up. (SM)

Ruel Gaviola, PO Box 91934, Santa Barbara, CA 93190-1934 \$2

Amusing Yourself to Death #3, May 97

Subtitled "A Small-Press Resource", this is a zine about zines. There's news about zines, lots of reviews, and an article about zine libraries. It's a good start, and there's plenty more for them to cover. (JC) \$2 ppd; PO Box 91934, Santa Barbara, CA 93190; rgaviola@aol.com

BB Gun #3

Already flipped through this one at Tower and it is a decent big, glossy kinda zine. Lots of interviews and ads, your typical. Great band selections though: Billy Childish, Shonen Knife, Team Dresch, Red Aunts, Jayne County and Demoltion Doll Rods. Pricey. (EA)

\$4.00 BB Gun (get it at any fine magazine outlet)

Billy Syndrome's Secret Comics

So I get this a day before the big Oblivion tour (cheap band plug), and I say to myself, "Shit, I have to somehow find time to review this zine AND listen to the 7 inch that comes inside." So as I read these cartoons I say to myself, "man, this sucks." I like comics, I like 7 inches, and I like a good rub down, but I do not like this . It is boring and dumb. (BC)

\$5; Slutfish #A2, 327 Bedford ave. Brooklyn, NY. 11211.

Blame it on the Fat Kid #1

Oh Charles of Gern Blandsten has outdone himself here. This little zine is so fucking funny I nearly pissed my pants. Fat jokes, fat bands (Big Boys, Poison Idea, Minutemen, Dicks) and a hilarious fake history of GB. Definitely worth the 25 cents it will cost you. Why you are at it, order the 1.6 Band 7" or

Discography from him as well (if you don't have them, they are masterpieces). (EA)

Gern Blandsten PO Box 356 River Edge, NJ 07661

Blind to Faith #1

Nice cardstock cover and large cut and paste graphics. This is a pretty thin looking zine anyway but the absolute minimal amount of content was still surprising. There is a rant page, an interview with Nine Shocks Terror (decent), reprinted interviews with Necros and Bad Brains (not very interesting or informative), and some reviews. Reminds me somewhat of It's Alive fanzine which tons of people seem to love. (KB)

\$1 4311 Lorain Ave. Cleveland, OH 44113

Blipvert #5

Blipvery hits us with Charlie Brown cartoons gone bad, how to wipe out a city, and lots of Captain Fantastic. The material was interesting enough to hold my tired and jaded attention. The cover is a nice shot of magnets being used to spell out the zine name and some other info. (BC)

\$2.00 Blipvert, N4309 County Y, Chilton, WI 53014

Bowling Ball Trimnastics #1

A good messy cut and paste zine with personality. It's got little stories and art and reviews and cool stuff and interviews with Garden Variety and Jawbreaker. But probably the best thing about this

zine is the tape that comes with it — possibly the most eclectic mixed tape I've ever heard. It's perfect for short-attention-span people, with no sound byte more than about 20 seconds. And the subject matter runs the gamut — from clips of rap songs to bits of kid's stories to classical music to three lines from a Bikini Kill song to slices of conversation ... it's deranged. Very cool. (SM) 14865 S.W. 104 St. Apt. 23, Miami, Fl 33196 \$1

Broken Pencil #5

The Canadian Factsheet Five. Why is that funny? I'm not really sure. But that's exactly what this is. Tons of zine reviews of souly Canadian publications. Strange but true! (DS)

\$4.95; PO Box 203, Station P, Toronto, Ontario M5S 2S7

Camera Obscura #46/47

Clocking in at 16 pages, the editor of Camera Obscura feels compelled to make it a double issue "based soley on page count, not proliference of material." Brainy move. All this zine is is reviews of CDs put out by washed up progressive rock outfits like Traffic and filled with such zingers as "it's not too much a secret that Banks can barely pick his nose without Genisis to assist him." History shows us that a major reason punk started was because of wank-off music like this guy covers. Wake up, your guys lost. (DS)

1508 Faymont Manhattan Beach, CA 90266

Carnival of Chaos

This is a book! Wow, I get to read and review a book. Hello Big Time! So this here is a 120 pages of the accounts that happened on the road with the Nomadic Festival. So it is all about this traveling freak show of hippie-punks that do freaky shit and like witches. (I am sure you will see that review on the back of their next book eh?) Anyhow, the cut and paste style is really catchy and I liked the pictures. The tales inside are interesting and entertaining. I plan to read the whole thing soon. You should too, as it wouldn't kill ya' to read a damn book every once in a while. (BC)

\$? Bloodlink Press PO Box 7414 Philadelphia, PA.

Chain Reaction #1

Another It's Alive type zine - large graphics and photos, cut and paste, minimum of actual writing, reprinted old flyers. The content is a bit fuller than It's Alive with a long-ass interview with Sick of it All, an old-ass never-printed interview with Judge, anti Lost N' Found and anti Victory rants, and some really boring and repetitive show reviews. The redone Victory logo with a second bulldog humping the other is pretty funny as well as the sheets of graphics to make stickers with to put on Victory releases. This is well done and fairly creative, especially for a first issue. (KB)

\$2 3717 Big Canyon Ct. San Bernardino, CA 92407

Change Zine #9

Pat West finally realized that he was putting out the ugliest zine on the block, so he convinced our own Josh Hooten to lay out the new issue. Hoots was kept on a pretty tight leash the whole time, but his keen sense of style still shows through, albeit subtly. As always, a good read. And this time, it's actually READABLE. Interveiews with Avail, Fugazi and many others. Still a little too much on the toughguy tip for my

tastes, but I'm warming up to it. (DS) \$2; PO Box 996 Norwalk CT 06856-0996

Chimps #2

Wow! I reviewed number one last issue and this one is just as fat and full of tremendous writing. What I suggest is take out about four or five dollars (two issues coming from UK) and send it immediately then read the rest of this to get both issues. This one doesn't have the heavy hitting interviews like the first month, but Layla's writing is a rambling but easy to follow joy into one skater girls mind. Highly suggested. (EA) \$2 Layla Gibbon c/o PO Box 2804 Brighton bn2 2au UK



Chumpire #85

How this little zine keeps going is beyond me. I think this is the last of these I will review. It is a page long and has reviews and thought and stuffs. Simple, one stamp gets you it. (EA)

PO Box 680 Conneaut Lake, PA 16316-0680

Cockamamie Characters #1

Nice title. So inside are all these characters. One page per character and each has a picture and slight description. I guess the author went up to 40 writers and gave them a name of a character and asked them to draw and write about them. Some of them are kinda "Tick'ish" which is cool, but none were cute enough to jag off to. Well, get it and see for yourself... (BC) \$2.00 3505 Lakewood dr. Waterford, M1. 48329.

\$2.00 3505 Lakewood dr. Waterford, Wil. 46525

Dogprint #9

Nice hardcore zine which comes with a split with Spazz (surprise) and Black Army Jacker. I really enjoy the Spazz stuff. As a bonus you can read interviews while listening. Typical format, with a few extra columns that are fun to read and way, way too many reviews. (EA)

\$3 w/single PO Box 84 Suffern NY 10901

Dream Whip #9

Dream Whip is one of my favorite zines. Its small pages are filled with stories of travel, wonderful because Bill has the ability to make ordinary places sound otherworldly. The stories don't dwell on specifics — many times the name of a place isn't even mentioned in favor of vague terms like "the city" or "the south" — something that sets this zine apart from most other travel-oriented zines. Interspersed throughout are endearing little comics and pictures, illustrations of little situations and incidents. Highly recommended. (SM)

PO Box 53832, Lubbock, TX 79453 \$1

Eggplant place comics #5

This is a sick lil' comic filled with jiz, death, blowjobs, political punks, and other naughty things. I liked it, but Milwaukee scares me. For mature readers only... blah... blah... blah.(BC) \$1.00 Dug 2016N. Booth St. Milwaukee, WI. 53212

False Advertising #1

07041.

This new Jersey zine (get it it's new and from Jersey ha ha ha ha)deals with a lot of stuff including hardcore, Slayer, Out Of Order, being afraid and other things of interest.

Short review for a medium sized zine. (BC)

Rann 37-1A Short Hills Circle, Millburn, NJ.

The Flashing Astonisher #8, Fall 1996

This is a local zine out of the Syracuse ("...a total lifeless pimple on the ass of the cultural planet") area; you know the type, with things like ads for takeout Mexican places and reviews of diners ("If I ever make a movie, I want to have a death scene in their bathrooms"). There's lots of reviews, with a special sections for local bands ("there is no substitute for clouds and rain to make a good scene") and local zines ("what else is there to do when it's raining?") Other features are "Best Places to Masturbate" and "The Story of Ling Ling", a twisted comic about a hoax poster seeking a missing dog head. If you like this sort of stuff then we have something in common. (JC)

\$1; c/o Gregg A.R. Yeti, 113 Fleetwood Layne, Minoa, NY 13116; gcjohnso@mailbox.syr.edu

Gee-zuz mag #28

You all probably have heard of the ever so shocking Gee-zuz mag by now. If not, it is a shock zine that takes a twisted look at religion and all its stories. Inside is some interesting and shocking stuff. But you will go to H-E double hockey sticks if you like it. It is really shocking. (BC)

\$? 341 East 16th Ave. Vancouver, BC Canada V5T 2T7.

Got That? #4

I'd normally hate a zine like this—some high school kid writing about smoking up, hanging out, and being cool—but because it comes outta Hong Kong, it's vaguly more interesting than if it came out of Birmingham or something. The locations are different so it seems different over all. But I guess being a bored teenager with some expendable cash is pretty much the same the world over.

\$1; c/o Joe Anclien Hong Kong Parkview Tower 13 Apt 673 Hong Kong

Greedy Pigs #4

A fairly mediocre cut-and-paste music zine. Interviews with Set Against, Jon Doe, Bus Station Loonies, reviews, columns and (ugh) poetry. (SM) 19 Brindley Rd., Rugby, Warks, CV214BJ, UK \$2 ppd.

Gutless #2

An absolutely huge personal zine. The focus is indie rock, heavy on the reviews, with bands such as Mountain Goats, Tullycraft, and Diskothi-Q. It's one of those cut-n-paste collage zines which can be amusing if you're not yet totally sick of the style. It has an earnest and consistent style, but nothing in it made too much of an impression — maybe it would mean more to me if I was into the music. Two articles that I found interesting were: a long list of record labels and how each one got its name, and a list entitled "You Might Be From Michigan If..." (...you know what a pastie is.) (JC)

\$5 ppd; c/o Stephen Cramer, 3122 Harvard Rd., Royal Oak, MI 48073; secramer@oakland.edu

Happy Happy Kill Kill #10

Funny stuff with some hidden political messages. Poetry (that isn't too bad), comics, fake rejected Baywatch episodes and a Boys Life interview. Send em some stamps and its yours.

Happy Happy Kill Kill, 736 Summersong Ln. Encinitas, CA

He is just a Rat #5

This glossy comic is very nice indeed. It has a story line dealing with some rats, and some drag racing monkeys. also inside is a plot and some things that deal with some kind of a story. I like comics 'cause

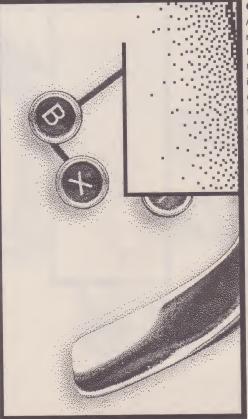
they are less stressful than a book. (BC)

\$2.75 Exclaim! Brand Comics 7-B Pleasant Blvd. #966 Toronto, Ontario Canada M4T 1K2

High School Psychopath #1

Crazy high school hyjinx! The longest piece in this 1/4 size zine is a narrative about going to Madison, Wisconsin and partaking in a riot with drunk frat boys & stoned hippies. Yee haw. Second was a narrative about working at a Ben Franklin that 2 pages in explains that "I don't have any good work stories from the place because nothing ever happened." Good thing you're writing about it then. I've seen this zine 100 times before with 100 different titles. Things change, yet so much stays the same. (DS)

2 stamps; PO Box 804 Wayzata MN 55391



Hit it or Quit it! Spring 97'

Lots o' columns and ads. Great Red Aunts interview that begs the question, "Why don't more zines give interviews in unconventional formats?" I like this zine. Great article exploring the American male losing his virginity in movies of the early eighties. A little thin, but can come with a fine Red Aunts / Constant Comment split 7" record. (EA)

\$4 w/ 7" or \$2 w/o. PO Box 381219 LA, CA 99038

International Straight-Edge Bulletin #21

I really, really like this zine a lot. The name may turn a bunch of people off but this is fucking incredible. This isn't just scene reports from all over the world, this is articles, columns, reviews, interviews - fucking everything from different perspectives from all over the world. I can't even begin to mention everything in this zine but the pieces I liked best were: the article on recycled paper, the mail section (believe me, I never thought a letters section in a zine could be enjoyable), and the columns. Most of the columns were SxE related but not in the "this is why you should be SxE" vein, just somehow related to SxE (keep the title in mind). There are interviews with Monster X, Ramsey of AK Press, and Hablan X La Espalda from Uruguay. If you're interested in reading something almost utterly different from other fanzines while still having the same "formula", this is a must have. (KB)

\$3 Yann Boisleve BP 7523 35 075 Rennes cedex 3 France

Kittums #4

The cover says it is kittylicious, I agree. Being that we have five cats/kittens in our house I loved this zine. From the stories that made me laugh (masturbating cat), cry (death of a kitten) and laugh again (kitty vocabulary). This is an essential zine for anyone who loves their cat. Nice to have a zine not about the new Promise Ring interview. Oh yeah, written by co-runner of Honey Bear if that helps. (EA)

KITTUMS PO Box 410312 San Francisco, CA 94141

Lousy! Magazine #7

This is "the condensed version of my life sine last issue" — and some reviews. I didn't have much time to read this, but it seems like a very personal zine. What I read was pretty well-written and interesting. The poor layout makes it hard to read, though. (SM)

PO Box 53, Avon Lake, OH 44012-0053 \$1?

Mind Toilet #75

I got the last few issues of this zine, and the only real differences are this issue is on newsprint and I didn't like it as much. It's still packed with content, still sarcastic and witty, and still essentially a ska fanzine, but this one didn't have as much

funny stuff in it. The one really funny (and I mean really) is the column about this couple who got caught pantsless by the girl's dad when there was a dog involved. Yup. (SM)

PO Box 6132, L.I.C., NY 11106-2866 \$1?

The Mojo Action Companion Unit #1

This is another one of those nice glossy comics. (Punk Planet is just settin" me up with the cool stuff to review this month) This one has lots of sub-plots in its little comics that are featured. they seem to involve these down to earth, white trash kinda folks. Read this. (BC)

\$2.75 Exclaim! Brand 7-B Pleasant Blvd. #966 Toronto, Ontario, Canada M4T 1K2

Monkey on my Dick #1

This is quite possibly the worst bunch of stapled together pages I've ever laid eyes on. Half the pages are either duplicated or upside down, it's messy to the point of being illegible, and all they seem to talk about is some stupid band called Sonic Enema. Let's all hope really hard that there isn't an issue #2. (SM)

2730 Polk St., Lenzburg, IL 62255 postage or trade

Mystery Meat #4

It's one of those formula punk rock zines. Music reviews. Live reviews. Interviews (the Vandals, Wet-Nap, Guttermouth and Honeybucket.) Dull columns. It kinda sucks. (SM)

Box 118 2680 Quadra St., Victoria, BC, Canada V8T 4E4 \$2

Muddle #10

This is the first time I've ever seen Muddle, and I'm fairly impressed. There's definitely nothing new going on, staying firmly within the columns/ interview/ format you love so much, but what's there is solid. Interviews with J Church, Discount, Propaganndhi and more. One thing—why go to the bother of having page numbers if you don't have a table of contents? (DS)

\$2; PO Box 621-0621 Ithaca New York no zip code!

Not a Significant Source #1

Hmmmm. NASS has got what few zines have, talent and a reason. Whether that reason is to spread the word of the Assman or to make me laugh milk out my nose, I am not sure. Comics that make fun of Bill Cosby, stories of the Assman, Graffiti stuff and a good story about a boy and his bike. Recommended. (EA) 3 stamps, Not a Significant Source 147 S. Oxford St. #4B Brooklyn, NY 11217

Oculus Magazine #6.2

It took 29 people to put out a 32 page zine. Someone explain that to me please. Aside from the really nice brown ink they're using as a second color, there's nothing really to write home about Oculus. "Indie Rock" in the worst sense of the word. (DS)

PO Box 148 Hoboken, NJ 07030

Paranoy #15

Wow 15 issues is a lot these days! This zine is neato! It has this theme of the 80s and movies. Lots of opinions-articles on Repo man, Goonies, etc...etc... It has these fun quizzes too. Good job Amanda! (BC)

\$1.00 Amanda 1477 Leonard, St. Peter, MN. 56082

Pictures of Chairman Mao #1

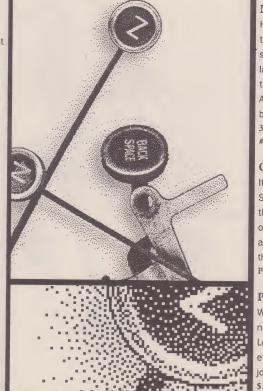
This was sent in by a fan of the zine and not the author. This is a great soccer zine and it shows that zines aren't always about punk bands and tour journals. I never wore a cup when I played soccer. (BC) \$2.00 where soccer zines are sold or e-mail maopix@aol.com.

Plot #10

German zine that looks like any other glossy zine from America. I can almost read it with my rudimentary German skills. The interviews probably go like this, "So what are your influences?" Get it, got it, good. (EA) Couldn't find an address that matched with the name.

The Plot Thickens#1

This is a zine that has lots of punk, religious, and music related humor. It's only a buck so get it you cheap American bastards! (BC) \$1.00 Slab-O-Concrete PO Box 148, Hove BN3 3DQ U.K.



Private Catholic #3

Nice little zine about Catholic school written by Gina. Simply stories about catholic school, once again thankful for a fun zine not about punk rock (except for a review of a Bikini Kill/Team Dresch show). Quirky and fun, get it. (EA)

\$1 + two stamps PO Box 22, 5863 Chevy Chase Pky NW Washington, DC 20015

Ouestion #1

An intelligent cut & past half size zine that includes photos of people puking? I haven't seen something like this in some time. In addition to the photos mentioned above (under the flattering title "Puke Planet"), there are some smart pieces about homophobia, the political implications of Barbie dolls, and a great piece about the Texas Legislature. It's an issue one, so there's a lot of things to improve, but it's already better than most zines of this format out there. (DS)

\$1; 2900 Swisher #206 Austin TX 78705

RTR #7

All scenes need a zine like RTR — one that covers local bands, shows and releases, and also keeps an eye on other stuff. The unfortunate thing about RTR is the scene it covers is one I've never thought much of -Erie, PA. But Debbie does good job with what she's got, taking a journalis-

tic approach to a lot of what she does in the zine. This issue has interviews with Erie hardcore bands Disciple and Digression and also Sensefield and Marky Ramone, there are columns, a touching story about a kid killed by a drunk driver, scene news and reviews. Worth picking up. (SM)

3306 Buffalo Rd., Erie, PA 16510 \$1?

Rust #5

I've thought for a while now that hardcore zines are in general a notch above punk zines and this serves to reinforce that idea. There is so much to read in this puppy but the best parts are the interviews with Sick of it All and the guys from Tooth and Nail and Rescue Records (Christian record labels), the listing of veggie/vegan restaurants all over the U.S. (fantastic idea!), and a piece entitled "The Metal Inquisition" which was all about how to dress and act like a heavy metal rocker and was hilarious (next issue will supposedly contain "metal makeovers" can't wait). Lots of great photos, solid reviews section, not too many ads. (KB) \$3? (it's thick) PO Box 2293 Seattle, WA 98111

Salt for Slugs

I really do have to leave for the Oblivion tour. I haven't even packed my clothes yet. I trust

that 80% of anything that comes out of Texas is cool. This zine looks cool. I gots to go, so just try this one so at least some dudes in Texas will like me after this month's reviews! (BC)

3.00 S.F.S. 1715 W. 35th street Suite 211, Austin, TX. 78703-1320

Schism #1

This is a fairly typical first issue. Cut and paste with huge type, tons of wasted space, and crappy ink drawings. This is pretty much all editorials/rants and articles on recycled topics (corporate rock is bad, T.V. is bad, "punk" is a media given label, etc.). The typical no racist, sexist or homophobic shit disclaimer is given in the intro for soliciting contributions yet in one article, the following quote can be found: "[for a male] to have sex with another male on stage is disgusting, in fact, it is disgusting anywhere." What the fuck is that shit? (KB)

\$1 + 2 stamps 1870 Crestwood Lane Muskegon, MI 49441

Scumbag Tulip #5

The only reason I'm not going to give this a bad review is because it's free. This thin zine has letters, scene news, a couple non-ground breaking rants, and that's about it. (SM)

Gannon Gilmore, 37 Kuhinia St., Wailuka, HI 96793 free (postage)

Shakeface #1

A good start for this little zine. It has some legible handwriting, some good art, reviews, how to make a cardboard wallet, guide to band web pages and interviews with Unsane and Mighty Mighty Bosstones and Poster Children. It also has a silly but sincere thing about being straightedge that quotes that Minor Threat song that started it all. Promising. (SM)

15 W. McMillan Ave. #2, Cincinnati, OH 45219 \$1

Shredding Material #10

According to the intro, Shredding Material has been around for 9 years. They're at issue 10. This is what's known as pacing yourself. However, if it takes more than a year to put out an issue, you'd like to see more quality material than is in here. If this came out quarterly, I'd be impressed. It doesn't. I'm not. Interviews with Gameface, Stanford Prison Experiment, & The Melvins among others. (DS)

\$2; 2515 Bidle Rd. Middletown, MD 21769

Slut #48; January/February 1997

I was really impressed. There's not that much here, just some random opinions and observations, but it has a focus and energy that made me keep reading and left me feeling like there was a point to it all. It's intelligent and well-written, and the layout is inviting; maybe 48 issues is enough practice to get good, or maybe if you're bad you don't keep at it. All I know is it's good. What's it about, you ask? Well there's an article entitled "Why California Should Snap Off The Western Seaboard And Fall Into The Pacific Ocean" (good: "Californians would be rid of themselves", bad: "the rainbow Manic Panic oil slick"). Elsewhere he observes: "You know how your face has that squashed look when you wake up in the morning? Well, British people look like that all day long." There's plenty of serious stuff too, but it doesn't make as good review quotes... (JC) \$1 + 2 stamps; 41 Cornbury Court, Owings Mills, MD 21117

Wow, 50 issues. Slut is made up mostly of short stories that are amusing and reveal something about what the author thinks about stuff. There are also a few reviews, instructions on how to sing like Stephen Alkmus, some journal entries and sundry things. There's a lot of reading here, and about half of it is pretty good. (SM)

41 Cornbury Ct., Owings Mills, MD 21117 \$1.50

Sound Views #45

Another fine installment of this East Coast institution. This one features a really interesting article about '60s musical revolutionaries The Fugs and an article on illustrator Danny Hellman. Always a good read. (DS)

\$2; 96 Henry Street Suite 5W Brooklyn NY 11201-1713

Spaghetti Dinner and Dancing #9

This issue has got a lot of typing in only 22 little pages. Every time I read Randy's zine I feel like a read a good little book. If you are new to zines this would be a good place to go if Cometbus is too big for you. The last half is a scene report with a bunch of bands I never heard of but the short descriptions and clear pictures kept me interested. Would have been nice to have a tape of these bands as well. (EA)

\$1 ppd Randy PO Box 2536 Missoula, MT 59806

Spank #20

After being all excited about this zine because of the attractive flourescent orange/red ink cover, I was let down with finding that this was one of the ugliest zines I've seen in some time inside. Here's a hint to all would-be zinesters out there. If you don't understand design and typography, DON'T DO IT. It just ends up looking really fucking bad and makes it very difficult to read. After struggling through interviews with Less Than Jake, J Church (my third J Church interview this review session) and Electric Frankenstein, my eyes gave out. (DS)

\$2; 1004 Rose Ave. Des Moines IA 50315-3000

Status Fanzine #3

A thick hardcore-oriented music zine that's well-executed enough to appear professional but remains DIY. Interviews/profiles with Texas is the Reason, Eyelid, The Promise Ring, Jeremy Enigk, the Suicide Machines and Citizen Fish. The interviews are long and ask good questions. There's also a ton of pictures, a big review section and the obligatory ads. A quality zine. (SM)

PO Box 1500, Thousand Oaks, CA 91358 \$3

Suburban Home #6

I've spent the last 10 minutes confusing this with Suburban Voice zine. It ain't.

For some reason they decided to interview bands that are on Hopeless Records ... maybe that was so they could blame the label for for signing bands that have nothing to say. This zine leaves me blank. (DS)

\$2; 1750 30th St. #365 Boulder CO 80301

Subversion #3

About half of the content is column-style about pretty run-of-the-mill topics like corporate America, homophobia, existentialism, and an anti-SxE rant (I wish people would give up already on this anti-SxE stuff). The written pieces are decent and show thought but I can't help but point out that the editor seems to think only males are reading his zine or at least the article called "Homophobe: you like girls they like boys, what's the problem?" and "you were raised since a young lad.." The other half of the zine is reviews. (KB)

\$2 US \$3 world PO Box 2881 Pullman, WA 99165-2881

Teriyaki Linguini #2 (11/96), #3 (4/97)

I guess you'd call these emo zines. They're full of stories and poems and the kind of stuff that people write in journals. It all has a sense of alienation and darkness; even the humor has a wry edge to it. Issue #2 starts out with "I also apologize, because this issue probably doesn't have as much whining and crying in it, because I am in a much better mood", then ends with a long kind of

how-to article about suicide. In issue #3 the focus is on love: "My tears hit the pavement like drops of pulp squeezed from a freshly cut orange." There are a lot of good things in here, even if it womes me slightly that I identify so much with it all. (JC)

\$1; c/o Andrew Burt, 777 S. 6th Ave., Park Falls, WI 54352

The Toilet Papers # 2

This zine has a lot of goofy comics that, while the art in many of them is good, their content is either too bizarre to get or pretty much sucks. There's also a Cub interview, tales from behind bars, and tips on how to get out of paying for a check at a restaurant; which is a dirty trick that waitresses usually end up paying for out of their measly tips, assholes. (SM)

PO Box 11114, Spring, TX 77391-1114 75 cents

The Vandals Voice #6

So this is almost 10 bucks to order. It comes with a 7 inch but come on, no one orders zines for over 2 dollars any more. No one reads zine reviews any more. Who gives a care. I could eat at Taco Bell for a week with 10 bucks. Blow Me Vandal Voice. (BC)

10 fuckin' dollars to ... ahh save it.

View Zine #3

This zine just can't make up its mind — calls itself a "hardcore punk graffiti ska zine." What it boils down to is a pretty run of the mill music zine with some pictures of graffiti, columns, reviews, goofy cartoons, stories about Hobbes (of Calvin and \dots), and interviews with Earthmover and Jimmy Eat World. Mediocre. (SM)

PO Box 530722, Livonia, MI 48153-0722 two stamps

Your Privilege #5

A personal punk-oriented zine, better than most. There's an interview with Rustweiler ("But to answer the question, no I don't think punk is dead because I know too many people who care."), another with the head of Apoplectic Greeting Cards, a Descendents show review, a Pranks

and Scams article, and reviews ("Imagine what the Pink Lincolns would sound like if they ate vast amounts of paint chips as kids and you would come close to the sound of the Geezers."). Worth sending for especially if you live in the area. (JC)

2 stamps; c/o Zach Blasphemy, 10422 Marvin Rd.

2 stamps; c/o Zach Blasphemy, 10422 Marvin Rd., Harrison, OH 45030

Yours Truly #2

This zine is, as some of my friends would say, "as emo as the trees." Actually, it's about half emo and half goofball. There's stuff on heavy metal and poopies and nudist straightedge and they even name Rikki Rocket from Poison "Vegan Stud of the Month." In contrast there's poetry and heartfelt prose and a cheesy but interesting story that starts out about how the writer got into punk rock then evolves into a story about some band that cries a lot. And speaking of some band, there's a write-in interview with Jawbreaker. Overall, a good, enjoyable little zine. (SM)

Peter, 2511 Kings Forest, Kingwood, TX 77339 \$1

Zapruder Headsnap #9

This zine is full of something most zines never have — very good writing. Clever, interesting stories make up this zine. Subjects covered include the inauguration, Mardi Gras,

Scientology, and legal prostitution. At \$3, this zine is a little pricey, but with a color cover and pages of good reading, it's worth it. (SM) 537 Jones St. #2074, San Francisco, CA 94102 \$3

Zine World #2

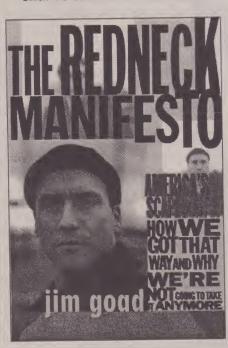
The alternative to Factsheet Five. I still think F5 is a great zine, but if ZW can come out more frequently than F5 does, it will very quickly become an institution in the zine scene. Definitely worth your support. (DS) \$3; 924 Valencia St. #203 San Francisco CA 94110

BOOK REVIEWS

BY ANNALEE NEWITZ

THE REDNECK MANIFESTO

By Jim Goad Simon and Schuster. 274 pages. \$22.



im Goad, the intellectual terrorist who created the infamous 'zine ANSWER Me!, has never been one to mince words. In The Redneck Manifesto, his first book, he aims his rhetorical semi-automatic at class prejudice in the United States and shoots the hell out of received wisdom about poor whites, the "degradedness" of redneck culture and militias, and what he calls a national "fixation" on racism. Perhaps even to his own surprise, Goad has written a book that is not only viciously funny and gleefully offensive, but also profoundly honest and even hopeful about the possibility of radical social transformation. This is a book for anyone who has ever listened in angry silence to jokes about trailer trash because they grew up in a trailer. It's also for anyone who likes their social criticism down and dirty, uncut with the jargon of liberal guilt.

The Redneck Manifesto makes good on the promise we saw in the best of Goad's writing for ANSWER Me!. Here he combines brilliant, informed cultural analysis with a fuck-you prose style that slams into your brain like a Herschel Gordon Lewis flick. Beginning with an account of his childhood in working-class Philadelphia, Goad calls himself "equal parts city slime and country vermin," a white guy who grew up with very little in the way of supremacy or material possessions. Although he strongly identifies with redneck America, Goad isn't shy about exploring the weirdness and contradictions in it. "Realizing that you're white trash is like being diagnosed with cancer: First comes

denial, then a "lashing-out" phase, then grudging acceptance," he writes. We find a lot of all three phases in this book, and I think it's the sheer, brutal intensity of seeing somebody whipping between these emotional states that makes *The Redneck Manifesto* so fascinating. Goad doesn't just explain that poor whites feel frustrated and manipulated by the government. He blasts us with his own frustration; he gives us concrete examples of exactly how you would feel if your government told you that you were poor because you deserved it, and that your fears were mere "paranoia" in spite of the fact that authority figures were lying to you.

Goad's well-researched section on the history of the white American underclass opens auspiciously with his promise to "fist fuck you with the facts." Starting with the Roman distaste for the Picts, a group of white cave-dwellers whose habits of life Goad compares with the contemporary "hillbilly," he explains that many whites who came to the United States were the descendants of what amounted to Roman white trash and serfs, "who were uniformly portrayed as cretinous, shuffling, animalistic, and lazy." Many whites, like Goad's ancestors, came to the United States as indentured servants (what Goad calls "temp-slaves") and convicts. In other words, rednecks have a long and rich history of being shuffled around, humiliated, and even enslaved by rich white land-and slave—owners. Poor whites and blacks have far more in common than they might realize.

Some of the best work in this book comes when Goad turns his eye toward cul-

tural stereotypes of the redneck. Noting* that trailer trash and redneck jokes could easily be catalogued as "hate speech," he explodes the myth that economic poverty equals intellectual, moral, and cultural poverty. He offers an etymology of the term hillbilly, then comments sardonically, "The hills. What a cheap, easy metaphor to represent a cultural wall." It's that wall, the one that middle-class whites erected between themselves and redneck "aliens," that Goad tries to bust down when he invents the idea of a "redneck trickster." We can see a big dose of Goad in his revaluation of a devaluing stereotype:

A redneck is a rebel, someone who opposes established authority such as the Pope and the cops... A redneck, as I define it, is someone both conscious of and comfortable with his designated role of cultural jerk. While hillbillies and white trash may act like idiots because they can't help it, a redneck does it to spite you. A redneck is somebody who knows you hate him and rubs it in your face.

Having embraced this vision of the defiant, trickster redneck, Goad moves on to explore the meaning of redneck life, often in terms that are as revealing as they are ironic. He explains the rampant use of crank among poor whites as a result of working long hours at a grueling job all week. Under such conditions, it's hard to cut out the work vibe and power down. Leisure, for the supposedly "free laborer," reflects the kind of work he does. We can

measure the stress and horror of the poor white's work week by considering the intensity and violence of his leisure time. In an inspired move, Goad also analyzes some of the new redneck "religions," such as Elvis worship, Bigfoot cults, and alien abductees. His passages on Bigfoot, which include oddball quotes from Bigfoot cult pornography, are truly original: he attributes Bigfoot-love to a wish for pre-industrial white identity, unsullied by the guilt of white imperialism.

Ultimately, however, the value of The Redneck Manifesto lies in Goad's unflinching treatment of contemporary racial politics. A chapter called "What's So Bad About Hatemongers, Gun Nuts, and Paranoid, Tax-Resisting Extremists?" sets the tone here: Goad is going to take these groups and their opinions seriously, and his effort to do so is quite a productive thought experiment. Noting that tax-resisters and conspiracy theorists actually aren't as wayout and crazed as they might seem, Goad argues compellingly that groups who provide legitimate criticism of the government are often lumped in with "extremists" and "racists" precisely so that their anti-authoritarian ideas will be demonized in the public sphere. Why pay taxes to a government that goes to war and employs bureaucrats to spy on us? Goad asks. Certainly there should be room to pose such questions without being called a Hitlerite lunatic. As for accusations that anti-government militias or angry rednecks like himself might be racist, Goad writes, "Although the race war always seems as if it's being fought among

the lower classes, it has consistently been orchestrated from above." Rednecks don't have the power to support institutional racism any more than most blacks do. It's Economic Supremacy that rules America, Goad argues, not White Supremacy.

Although sometimes Goad lapses into a fetishization of the white underclass that borders on stereotyping, and occasionally goes overboard with the purple prose, his reasoning in this book is admirable and politically savvy. Goad places the blame for racism and poverty in America squarely where it belongs: the rich have been responsible for working whites and people of color to death, then pitting the survivors against each other in a fight for decent jobs and a piece of the American Dream. With an honesty that does not exclude healthy self-criticism, Goad vacillates between rage at the middle-class, and frustration at his lingering and inexplicable sense of white guilt in a world that never gave him white privilege. "Hopefully," he writes, "all this racial hypersensitivity will one day be appreciated for its rollicking camp value . . . Fuck racial pride, let's have racial satire." But that kind of satire, for Goad, is not just about kicking back and having a giggle. It's a war cry, a call for genuine interracial revolution against the ruling classes who have stolen money and freedom from people of all races. In one of his many guardedly hopeful moments, Goad concludes, "The 'minorities' plus the rednecks equals the majority. It always has."

6841

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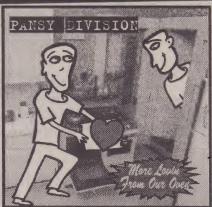
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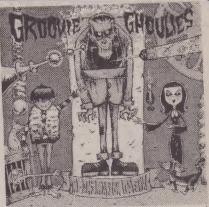
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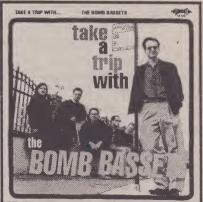
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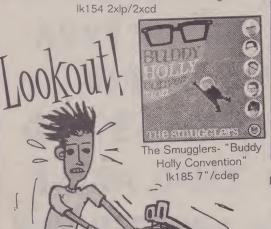
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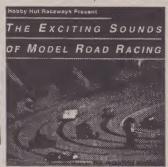


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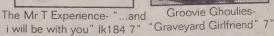


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PP15 Some people are calling this the "political" issue, which totally discounts all the other political articles we've printed. However, this issue does have politics in spades, as it features 20 pages (in three color!) on the Democratic & Republican conventions. It also has

interviews with Sarah Dyer from Action Girl Comics, Rhythm Collision, Chamberlain, and cheesecake as well as DIY, columns, and all that other stuff you can't get enough of! 120 pgs

PP16 Interviews with Sarah Jacobson (who as a result of this interview now writes our underground film review section), Damnation AD, The Dismemberment Plan, and Pat West of Change Zine. A fantastic article on Culture Jamming, as well as an article about the 1996-97 NBA season (yowza is right). The DIY files is a massive article about distributing your zine. Plus, the PP staff picks the best releases of 1996. Guess what? There's all the other stuff you like about PP in here! 120 pgs

PP17 If you don't already have this issue, you should. This issue features "All Punk Cons" the best critique of modern punk ever put to paper; before you go screaming about 'sellouts', make sure you've read the article. Interviews with The Descendents, Dan O'Mahoney, Snapcase, Rye Coalition, and Pain. An article on living with the possiblity of breast cancer. DIY on scanning, and of course much much much more. 136 pgs.

PP18 After an extended period of abscence from the underground, punk rock pioneer Jello Biafra sits down with Punk Planet to air his mind. 10 pages of Biafra fun. Watch out. In addition to Jello, there are interviews with Kiss it Goodbye, Jody Bleyle from Team Dresch, Cast Iron Hike, and Bust Fanzine. Articles on welfare reform, Mayan punks, rubberwear, and housing activists in San Francisco DIY on putting on your own zine fair, and absolutely tons more. 144 pgs.

PP19 Our biggest issue ever. PP19 explores the link between punk rock and heroin with 4 articles dedicated to discussing the drug's appeal to the punk community and the repercussions of that appeal. This ain't no simple "just say no" critique either: we know why you do H. But we also know why you need to stop. In addition to all that fun, there's interviews with The Softies, Troubleman Unlimited, Dillinger 4, Lookout Records and more. Articles on the battle between Alternative Tentacles and the Philadephia PD, The Who's Emma Collective, and more. There is so much in this issue we can't even list it all. 168 pgs.

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